THE

Saints Everlasting REST:

OR, A

TREATISE

ON THE

BLESSED STATE OF THE SAINTS

IN THEIR

ENJOYMENT OF GOD IN GLORY.

Extracted from the Works of Mr. BAXTER.

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TO THE

INHABITANTS

OF

KIDDERMINSTER,

My dear Friends,

IF either I or my labours have any thing of public uſe or worth, it is chiefly (though not only) yours. And I am convinced by Providence, that it is the will of God it ſhould be ſo. This I clearly diſcerned in my firſt coming to you, in my former abode with you, and in the time of my forced abſence from you. When I was ſeparated by the miſeries of the late unhappy war, I durſt not fix in any other congregation, but lived in a military, unpleaſing ſtate, leſt I ſhould foreſtal my return to you. The offers of greater worldly

accommodations was no temptation to me, once to queſtion whether I ſhould leave you: your free invitation of my return, your obedience to my doctrine, the ſtrong affection which I have yet towards you above all people, and the general hearty return of love which I find from you, do all perſuade me that I was ſent into the world eſpecially for the ſervice of your ſouls: and that even when I am dead, I might be yet a help to your ſalvation, the Lord hath forced me, quite beſide my own reſolution, to write this treatiſe, and leave it in your hands. It was far from my thoughts ever to have become thus public, and burdened the world with any writing of mine: therefore have I often reſiſted the requeſt of my reverend brethren, and ſome ſuperiors, who might elſe have commanded much more at my hands. But ſee how God over-ruleth and croſſes our reſolutions!

Being in my quarters far from home, caſt into extreme languiſhing (by the ſudden loſs of about a gallon of blood, after many years fore-going weakneſs) and having no acquaintance about me, nor any book but my Bible, and living in continual expectation of death, I bent my thoughts on my Everlaſting Reſt: and becauſe my memory,

mory, through extreme weakneſs, was imperfect, I took my pen, and began to draw up my own Funeral Sermon, or ſome helps for my own meditations of heaven, to ſweeten both the reſt of my life and my death. In this condition God was pleaſed to continue me about five months from home; where being able for nothing elſe, I went on with this work, which lengthened to this which you here ſee. It is no wonder therefore if I be too abrupt in the beginning, ſeeing I then intended but the length of a ſermon or two. Much leſs may you wonder if the whole be very imperfect, ſeeing it was written as it were with one foot in the grave, by a man that was betwixt the living and dead, that wanted ſtrength of nature to quicken invention or affection, and had no book but his Bible, while the chief part was finiſhed. But, O how ſweet is this providence now to my review! which ſo happily forced me to that work of meditation, which I had formerly found ſo profitable to my ſoul! and ſhewed me more mercy in depriving me of other helps, than I was aware of! And hath cauſed my thoughts to feed on this heavenly ſubject, which hath more benefitted me than all the ſtudies of my life.

And now, dear Friends, ſuch as it is, I here offer it you; and upon the knees of

my ſoul, I offer up my thanks to the merciful God, who have fetched up both me and it, as from the grave, for your ſervice: who reverſed the ſentence of preſent death which by the ableſt phyſicians was paſſed upon me! Who interrupted my public labours for a time, that he might force me to do you a more laſting ſervice which elſe I had never been like to have attempted! That God do I heartily bleſs and magnify, who hath reſcued me from the many dangers of four years war, and after ſo many tedious nights and days, and ſo many doleful ſights and tidings, hath returned me and many of yourſelves, and reprieved us now to ſerve Him in peace; And though men be ungrateful, and my body ruined beyond hope of recovery; yet he hath made up all in the comforts I have in you. To the God of mercy do I here offer up my moſt hearty thanks, who hath not rejected my prayers, but hath by a wonder delivered me in the midſt of my duties; and hath ſupported me theſe fourteen years in a languiſhing ſtate, wherein I have ſcarce had a waking hour free from pain; who hath above twenty ſeveral times delivered me, when I was near death. And though he hath made me ſpend my days in groans and tears, and in a conſtant expectation of my change, yet he hath not wholly diſabled me for his ſervice; and hereby hath more

more effectually ſubdue my pride, and made this world contemptible to me, and forced my dull heart to more importunate requeſts, and occaſioned more rare diſcoveries of his mercy, than ever I could have expected in a proſperous ſtate.

THE SAINTS EVERLASTING REST.

HEBREWS iv. 9.

There remaineth therefore a Reſt to the People of God.

CHAPTER I.

This Reſt defined.

IT was not only our intereſt in God, and actual fruition of him, which was loſt in *Adm's* fall; but all ſpiritual knowledge of him, and true diſpoſition towards ſuch a felicity. Man hath now a heart too ſuitable to his eſtate; a low ſtate, and a low ſpirit. As the poor man that would not believe that any one man had ſuch a ſum as an hundred pounds, it was ſo far above what he poſſeſſed: ſo man will hardly now believe, that there is ſuch a happineſs as once he had, much leſs as Chriſt hath now procured.

The apoſtle beſtows moſt of this epiſtle in proving to the *Jews*, that the end of all ceremonies and ſhadows, is to direct them to Jeſus Chriſt, the ſubſtance; and that the Reſt of Sabbaths, and *Canaan*, ſhould teach them to look for a future Reſt. My text is his concluſion after divers arguments to that end; a concluſion ſo uſeful to a believer, as containing the ground

of all his comforts, the end of all his duty and ſufferings that you may be eaſily ſatisfied, why I have made it the ſubject of my preſent diſcourſe. What more welcome to men under afflictions, than Reſt? What more welcome news to men under public calamities? Hearers, I pray God your entertainment of it be but half anſwerable to the excellency of the ſubject; and then you will have cauſe to bleſs God, while you live, that ever you heard it, as I have that ever I ſtudied it.

Let us ſee, 1. What this Reſt is. 2. What theſe people of God, and why ſo called. 3. The truth of this from other ſcripture-arguments. 4. Why this Reſt muſt yet remain. 5. Why only to the people of God. 6. What uſe to make of it.

And though the ſenſe of the text includes in the word *Reſt*, all that eaſe and ſafety which a ſoul, wearied with the burden of ſin and ſuffering, and purſued by law, wrath, and conſcience, hath with Chriſt in this life, the Reſt of grace: yet becauſe it chiefly intends the Reſt of eternal glory, I ſhall confine my diſcourſe to this.

The Reſt here in queſtion, is, the moſt happy eſtate of a chriſtian, having obtained the end of his courſe; or it is the perfect, endleſs fruition of God by the perfected ſaints, according to the meaſure of their capacity to which their ſouls arrive at death: and both ſoul and body moſt fully after the reſurrection and final judgment.

1. I call it the eſtate of a chriſtian, to note both the active and paſſive fruition, wherein a chriſtian's bleſſedneſs lies, and the eſtabliſhed continuance of both. Our title will be perfect, and perfectly cleared: ourſelves, and ſo our capacity perfected: our poſſeſſion and ſecurity for its perpetuity perfect; our reception from God perfect; and therefore our fruition of Him, and conſequently our happineſs, will then be perfect. And this is the eſtate which we now briefly men-

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tion, and ſhall afterwards more fully deſcribe.

2. I call it the moſt happy eſtate, to diſtinguiſh it not only from all ſeeming happineſs which is to be found in the enjoyment of creatures, but alſo from all thoſe beginnings, foretaſtes, and imperfect degrees which we have in this life.

3. I call it the eſtate of a chriſtian, where I mean only the ſincere, regenerate, ſanctified Chriſtian, whoſe ſoul having diſcovered that excellency in God through *Chriſt*, cloſeth with Him, and is cordially ſet upon Him.

4. I add, That this happineſs conſiſts in obtaining the end, where I mean the ultimate and principal end, not any ſubordinate or leſs principal. O how much doth our everlaſting ſtate depend on our right judgment and eſtimation of our end!

But it is a doubt with many, Whether the attainment of this glory may be our end? Nay, ſome have concluded, that it is mercenary: yea, that to make Salvation the end of duty, is to be a legaliſt, and act under a covenant of works, whoſe tenor is, *Do this and live.* And many that think it may be our end, yet think, it may not be our ultimate end; for that ſhould be only the glory of God. I ſhall anſwer theſe briefly.

1. It is properly called mercenary, when we expect it as wages for work done; and ſo we may not make it our end. Otherwiſe it is only ſuch mercenarineſs as Chriſt commandeth. For conſider what this end is; it is the fruition of God in Chriſt: and if ſeeking Chriſt be mercenary, I deſire to be ſo mercenary.

2. It is not a note of a Legaliſt neither. It hath been the ground of a multitude of late miſtakes in divinity, to think, that *Do this and live*, is only the language of the covenant of Works. It is true, in ſome ſenſe it is; but in another it is not. The law of Works only ſaith, *Do this* (that is, perfectly fulfil the whole Law) *and live*, (that is, for ſo doing:) but the law of Grace ſaith, *Do*

this and live, too: that is, Believe in Chriſt, ſeek him, obey him ſincerely, as thy Lord and King; forſake all, ſuffer all things, and overcome, and by ſo doing, or in ſo doing, you ſhall live. If you ſet up the abrogated duties of the law again, you are a legaliſt: if you ſet up the duties of the Goſpel in *Chriſt's* ſtead, in whole or in part, you err ſtill. *Chriſt* hath his place and work; duty hath its place and work too: ſet it but in its own place, and expect from it but its own part, and you go right; yea, more, (how unſavoury ſoever the phraſe may ſeem you may ſo far as this comes to, truſt to your duty and works; that is, for their own part: and many miſcarry in expecting no more from them, (as to pray, and to expect nothing the more) that is, from Chriſt in a way of duty. For if duty have no ſhare, why may we not truſt Chriſt as well in a way of diſobedience as duty? In a word, you muſt both uſe and truſt duty in ſubordination to Chriſt, but neither uſe them nor truſt them in co-ordination with him. So that this derogates nothing from Chriſt; for he hath done, and will do all his work perfectly, and enableth his people to do theirs: yet he is not properly ſaid to do it himſelf; he believes not, repents not, but worketh theſe in them; that is, enableth and exciteth them to it. No man muſt look for more from duty than God hath laid upon it: and ſo much we may and muſt.

3. If I ſhould quote all the ſcriptures that plainly prove this, I ſhould tranſcribe a great part of the Bible: I will therefore only deſire you to ſtudy what tolerable interpretation can be given of the following places, which will not prove that life and ſalvation may be, yea, muſt be the end of duty. John v. 40. *Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.* Matt. xi. 22. *The kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.* Matt. vii. 13. Luke xiii. 24. *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate.* Phil. ii. 12. *Work*

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out your ſalvation with fear and trembling. Rom. ii. 7, 10. *To them who by patient continuance in well doing, ſeek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life. Glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good.* 1. Cor. ix. 24. *So run that ye may obtain.* 2 Tim. ii. 12. *If we ſuffer with him we ſhall reign with him.* 1 Tim. vi. 12. *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.* 1 Tim. vi. 18. 19. *That they do good works, laying up a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.* Rev. xxii. 14. *Bleſſed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and enter in by the gates into the city.* Matt. xxv. 34, 35, 36. *Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit,* &c. *For I was an hungred, and ye,* &c. Luke xi. 28. *Bleſſed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.* Yea, the eſcaping of hell is a right end of duty to a believer. Heb. iv. 1. *Let us fear, leſt a promiſe being left us of entering into his reſt, any of you ſhould come ſhort of it.* Luke xii. 5. *Fear him that is able to deſtroy both ſoul and body in hell; yea,* (whatſoever others ſay) *I ſay unto you fear him.* 1 Cor. ix. 27. *I keep under my body, and bring it into ſubjection; leſt when I have preached to others I myſelf ſhould be a caſt-away.* Multitudes of ſcriptures and ſcripture arguments might be brought, but theſe may ſuffice to any that believe ſcripture.

4. For thoſe that think this Reſt may be our end, but not our ultimate end, that muſt be God's glory only: I will not gainſay them. Only let them conſider, *What God hath joined, man muſt not ſeparate.* The glorifying himſelf, and the ſaving of his people, (as I judge) are not two ends with God, but one; to glorify his mercy in their ſalvation: ſo I think they ſhould be with us together intended: we ſhould aim at the glory of God (not alone conſidered, without our ſalvation, but) in our ſalvation. Therefore I know no warrant for putting ſuch a queſtion to ourſelves,

as ſome do, whether we could be content to be damned, ſo God were glorified? Chriſt hath put no ſuch queſtions to us, nor bid us put ſuch to ourſelves. Chriſt had rather that men would enquire after their true willingneſs to be ſaved, than their willingneſs to be damned. Sure I am, *Chriſt* himſelf is offered to faith, in terms for the moſt part reſpecting the welfare of the ſinner, more than his own abſtracted glory. He would be received as a Saviour, Mediator, Redeemer, Reconciler, and Interceſſor. And all the precepts of Scripture being backed with ſo many promiſes and threatenings, every one intended of God, as a motive to us, imply as much.

5. I call a Chriſtian's Happineſs, the end of his courſe, thereby meaning, as *Paul*, 2 Tim. iv. 7. the whole ſcope of his life. For Salvation may and muſt be our end: ſo not only the end of our faith, (tho' that principally) but of all our actions: for as whatſoever we do, muſt be done to the glory of God, ſo may they all be done to our Salvation.

6. *Laſtly*, I make Happineſs to conſiſt in this end obtained; for it is not the mere promiſe of it that immediately makes perfectly happy, nor *Chriſt's* mere purchaſe, nor our mere ſeeking, but the apprehending and obtaining, which ſets the crown on the Saint's head.

CHAP. II.

What this Reſt pre-ſuppoſeth.

FOR the clearer underſtanding the Nature of this Reſt, you muſt know,

(1.) There are ſome things pre-ſuppoſed to it.

(2.) Some things contained in it.

(1.) All

(1.) All theſe things are pre-ſuppoſed in this Reſt.

1. A perſon in motion, ſeeking Reſt. This is man here in the way, angels have it already: and the devils are paſt hope.

2. An end toward which he moveth for Reſt. This can be only God. He that taketh any thing elſe for happineſs, is out of the way the firſt ſtep. The principal damning ſin, is, to make any thing beſide God our end or reſt. And the firſt true ſaving act, is to chooſe God only for our end and happineſs.

3. A diſtance is pre-ſuppoſed from this end, elſe there can be no motion towards it. This ſad diſtance is the caſe of all mankind ſince the fall; it was our God that we principally loſt, and were ſhut out of his gracious preſence; and ſince are ſaid to be *without him in the world*; nay, in all men, at age, here is ſuppoſed, not only a diſtance, but alſo a contrary motion. When *Chriſt* comes with regenerating, ſaving grace, he finds no man ſitting ſtill, but all poſting to eternal ruin; till, by conviction, he firſt brings them to a ſtand; and by converſion, turns firſt their hearts, and then their lives, to himſelf.

4. Here is pre-ſuppoſed the knowledge of the true ultimate end, and its excellency; and a ſerious intending it. For ſo the motion of the rational creature proceedeth: an unknown end, is no end; it is a contradiction. We cannot make that our end, which we know not; nor that our chief end, which we know not, or judge not to be the chief good. Therefore where this is not known, that God is this end; there is no obtaining reſt in an ordinary way, whatſoever may be in ways that by God are kept ſecret.

5. Here is pre-ſuppoſed, not only a diſtance from this reſt, but alſo the true knowledge of this diſtance. If a man have loſt his way, and knows it not, he ſeeks not to return; therefore they that never knew they were without God, never

yet enjoyed him; and they that never knew they were actually in the way to hell, did never yet know the way to heaven: nay, there will not only be a knowledge of this diſtance, and loſt eſtate; but affections anſwerable. Can a man find himſelf on the brink of hell, and not tremble? Or find he hath loſt his God, and his ſoul, and not cry out, *I am undone?*

6. Here is alſo pre-ſuppoſed, a ſuperior moving cauſe, elſe ſhould we all ſtand ſtill, and not move a ſtep forward toward our reſt; no more than the inferior wheels in the watch would ſtir, if you take away the ſpring, or the firſt mover. This is God. If God move us not, we cannot move. Therefore it is a moſt neceſſary part of our chriſtian wiſdom, to keep our ſubordination to God, and dependance on him: to be ſtill in the path where he walks, and in that way where his Spirit doth moſt uſually move.

7. Here is pre-ſuppoſed, an internal principle of life in the perſon. God moves not man like a ſtone, but by enduing him firſt with life, not to enable him to move without God, but thereby to qualify him to move himſelf, in ſubordination to God, the firſt mover.

8. Here is pre-ſuppoſed alſo, ſuch a motion as is rightly ordered and directed toward the end. Not all motion or labour brings to reſt. Every way leads not to this end; but he whoſe goodneſs hath appointed the end, hath in his wiſdom, and by his ſovereign authority, appointed the way. *Chriſt* is the door, the only way to this Reſt. Some will allow nothing elſe to be called the way, leſt it derogate from *Chriſt*. The truth is, *Chriſt* is the only way to the Father: yet faith is the way to *Chriſt*; and goſpel obedience, or faith and works, the way for thoſe to walk in, that are in *Chriſt*.

9. There is ſuppoſed alſo, a ſtrong and conſtant motion, which may reach the end. The lazy world, that think all too much, will find this to their coſt one day; they that think leſs

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ado might have ſerved, do but reproach *Chriſt* for making us ſo much to do. They that have been moſt holy, watchful, painful to get to heaven, find when they come to die, all too little: we ſee daily the beſt Chriſtians, when dying, repent their negligence: I never knew any then repent his holineſs and diligence. It would grieve a man's ſoul to ſee a multitude of miſtaken ſinners lay out their care and pains for a thing of nought, and think to have eternal ſalvation with a wiſh. If the way to heaven be not far harder than the world imagines, Chriſt and his apoſtles knew not the way: for they have told us, *That the kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence; that the gate is ſtrait, and the way is narrow; and we muſt ſtrive, if we will enter; for many ſhall ſeek to enter, and not be able,* (which implies the faintneſs of their ſeeking, and that they put not ſtrength to the work;) and *that the righteous themſelves are ſcarcely ſaved.*

I have ſeen this doctrine alſo thrown by with contempt by others, who ſay, What! do ye ſet us a working for heaven? Doth our duty do any thing? Hath not Chriſt done all? Is not this to make him a half Saviour, and to preach the law?

Anſ. It is to preach the law of *Chriſt*; his ſubjects are not lawleſs; it is to preach duty to Chriſt. None a more exact requirer of duty or hater of ſin, than Chriſt. Chriſt hath done, and will do all his work; and therefore is a perfect Saviour: but yet leaves us a work too: he hath paid all the price, and left us none to pay; yet he never intended his purchaſe ſhould put us into abſolute title to glory, in point of law, much leſs into immediate poſſeſſion. He hath purchaſed the crown to beſtow, only on condition of believing, denying all for him, ſuffering with him, perſevering and overcoming. He hath purchaſed juſtification to beſtow, only on condition of our believing, yea, repenting and believing; though it is Chriſt that enableth us alſo to perform the condition.

condition. It is not a Saviour offered, but received alſo, that muſt ſave: it is not the blood of Chriſt ſhed only, but applied alſo, that muſt fully deliver: nor is it applied to the juſtification or ſalvation of a ſleepy ſoul. Nor doth Chriſt carry us to heaven in a chair of ſecurity. Or righteouſneſs, which the law of works requireth, and by which it is ſatisfied, is wholly in Chriſt, and not one grain in ourſelves: nor muſt we dare to think of patching up a legal righteouſneſs of Chriſt's and our own together; that is, that our doings can be the leaſt part of ſanctification for our ſins. But yet ourſelves muſt perſonally fulfil the conditions of the new covenant; and ſo have the perfect evangelical righteouſneſs, or never be ſaved by Chriſt's righteouſneſs. Therefore ſay not, it is not duty, but Chriſt: for it is Chriſt in a way of duty. As duty cannot do it without Chriſt, ſo Chriſt will not do it without duty.

And as this motion muſt be ſtrong, ſo muſt it be conſtant, or it will fall ſhort of Reſt. To begin in the ſpirit, and end in the fleſh, will not bring to the end of the ſaints. Men, as holy as the beſt of us, have fallen off. Read but the promiſes, Rev. ii. and iii, *To him that overcometh.* Chriſt's own diſciples muſt be commanded to continue in his love, and that by keeping his commandments: and to abide in him, and his word in them, and he in them. See John xv. 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10.

CHAP. III.

What this Reſt containeth.

1. THERE is contained in this Reſt,

1. A ceſſation from Motion or Action. Not from all action, but of that which implies the abſence,

ſence of the end. When we have obtained the haven, we have done ſailing: when we are at our journey's end, we have done with the way. Therefore propheſying ceaſeth, tongues fail, and knowledge ſhall be done away; that is, ſo far as it was imperfect. There ſhall be no more prayer, becauſe no more neceſſity, but the full enjoyment of what we prayed for. Neither ſhall we need to faſt, and weep, and watch any more, being out of the reach of ſin and temptations. Nor will there be uſe for inſtructions and exhortations: preaching is done. The miniſtry of man ceaſeth: ſacraments uſeleſs: the labourers called in, becauſe the harveſt is gathered: the unregenerate paſt hope, the ſaints paſt fear, for ever. Much leſs ſhall there be any need of labouring for inferior ends, as here we do; ſeeing they all ſhall devolve themſelves into the ocean of the ultimate end, and the leſſer good be ſwallowed up in the greateſt.

2. This Reſt containeth a perfect freedom from all the evils that accompanied us through our courſe, and which neceſſarily follow our abſence from the chief good: beſides our freedom from thoſe eternal flames, which the neglecters of Chriſt muſt endure. There is no ſuch thing as grief and ſorrow known there: nor is there ſuch a thing as a pale face, a languid body, feeble joints, unable infancy, decrepid age, peccant humours, painful ſickneſs, griping fears, conſuming care, nor whatſoever deſerves the name of Evil. Indeed a gale of groans and ſighs, a ſtream of tears, accompanied us to the very gates and there bade us farewel for ever. *We did weep and lament when the world did rejoice; but our ſorrow is turned into joy, and our joy ſhall no man take from us.*

3. This Reſt containeth the higheſt degree of perfection, both of ſoul and body. This qualifies them to enjoy the glory, and thoroughly to partake the ſweetneſs of it. Were the glory never ſo great, and themſelves not made capable of it, it would be little to them. But the more perfect the

the appetite, the ſweeter the food. The more muſical the ear, the more perfect the ſoul, the more joyous thoſe joys, and the more glorious is that glory. Nor is it only ſinful imperfection that is removed, nor only that which is the fruit of ſin, but that which adhered to us in our pure nature. There is far more procured by Chriſt than was loſt by Adam. It is the miſery of wicked men here, that all without them is mercy, but within them a heart full of ſin, ſhuts the door againſt all, and makes them but the more miſerable. When all is well within, then all is well indeed. Therefore will God, as a ſpecial part of his ſaints happineſs, perfect themſelves as well as their condition.

4. This Reſt containeth, as the principal part, our neareſt fruition of God. As all good whatſoever is compriſed in God, and all in the creatures are but drops of this ocean; ſo all the glory of the Bleſſed is compriſed in their enjoyment of God: and if there be any mediate joys there, they are but drops from this. If men and angels ſhould ſtudy to ſpeak the bleſſedneſs of that eſtate in one word, what can they ſay beyond this, That it is the neareſt enjoyment of God? Say, They have God: and you ſay, they have all that is worth having. O the full joys offered to a believer in that one ſentence of Chriſt's! I would not for all the world that verſe had been left out of the Bible: *Father, I will that thoſe whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou haſt given me*, John xvii. 24. Every word is full of life and joy. If the Queen of Sheba had cauſe to ſay of Solomon's glory, *Happy are thy men, happy are theſe thy ſervants, that ſtand continually before thee, and that hear thy wiſdom;* then ſure they that ſtand continually before God, and ſee his glory, and the glory of the Lamb, are ſomewhat more than happy; to them will Chriſt *give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midſt of the paradiſe of God*, Rev. ii. 7.

5. This

5. This Reſt containeth a ſweet and conſtant action of all the powers of the ſoul and body in this fruition of God. But great will the change of our bodies and ſenſes be; even ſo great, as now we cannot conceive. If grace makes a chriſtian differ ſo much from what he was, that the chriſtian could ſay to his companion, *Ego non ſum ego: I am not the man I was;* how much more will glory make us differ? We may then ſay, much more, This is not the body I had, and theſe are not the ſenſes I had. Yet becauſe we have no other name for them, let us call them ſenſes; call them eyes and ears, ſeeing and hearing: but conceive, that as much as a body ſpiritual, above the ſun in glory exceedeth theſe frail, noiſome, diſeaſed lumps of fleſh, that we now carry about us; ſo far ſhall our ſenſe of ſeeing and hearing exceed theſe we now poſſeſs: for the change of the ſenſes muſt be conceived proportionable to the change of the body. And doubtleſs as God advanceth our ſenſe, and enlargeth our capacity: ſo will he advance the happineſs of thoſe ſenſes, and fill up with himſelf all that capacity. And certainly the body ſhould not be raiſed up, if it ſhould not ſhare of the glory; for as it hath ſhared in the obedience and ſufferings, ſo ſhall it alſo do in the bleſſedneſs; and as Chriſt bought the whole man, ſo ſhall the whole partake of the everlaſting benefits of the purchaſe.

And if the body ſhall be thus employed, O how ſhall the ſoul be taken up! As its powers and capacities are greateſt, ſo its actions are ſtrongeſt, and its enjoyments ſweeteſt. As the bodily ſenſes have their proper aptitude & action, whereby they receive and enjoy their objects; ſo doth the ſoul in its own action, enjoy its own object; by knowing, by thinking, and remembering, by loving, and by delightful joying: by theſe eyes it ſees, and by theſe arms it embraceth. If it might be ſaid of the diſciples with Chriſt on earth, much more of them that behold him in his glory, *Bleſſed are the eyes that ſee the things that you ſee, and the ears that hear*

hear the things that you hear: for many princes and great ones have deſired (and hoped) to ſee the things that you ſee and have not ſeen them, &c. Matt. xiii. 16, 17.

Knowledge, of itſelf, is very deſirable. As far as the rational ſoul exceeds the ſenſitive, ſo far the delights of a philoſopher, in diſcovering the ſecrets of nature, and knowing the myſtery of ſciencies, exceeds the delights of the glutton, the drunkard, and of all voluptuous ſenſualiſts whatſoever; ſo excellent is all truth. What then is their delight, who know the God of truth? What would I not give, ſo that all the uncertain principles in Logic, Natural Philoſophy, Metaphyſics, and Medicine, were but uncertain? And that my dull, obſcure notions of them but quick and clear? O what then ſhould I not perform, or part with, to enjoy a clear and true apprehenſion of the moſt true God? How noble a faculty of the ſoul is the Underſtanding! It can compaſs the earth; it can meaſure the ſun, moon, ſtars, and heaven: it can foreknow each eclipſe to a minute, many years before: yea, but this is the top of all its excellency, it can know God, who is infinite, who made all theſe; a little here, and much more hereafter. O the wiſdom and goodneſs of our bleſſed Lord! He hath created the underſtanding with a natural bias to truth and its object: and to the prime Truth, as its prime object: and leſt we ſhould turn aſide to any creature, he hath kept this as his own divine prerogative, not communicable to any creature, *viz.* to be the prime truth.

Didſt thou never look ſo long upon the Son of God, till thine eyes were dazzled with his aſtoniſhing glory? and did not the ſplendor of it make all things below ſeem black and dark to thee, when thou lookedſt down again, (eſpecially in thy day of ſuffering for *Chriſt*, when he uſually appears moſt manifeſtly to his people?) Didſt thou never ſee *one walking in the midſt of the fiery furnace with thee, like the Son of God?* If thou know

know him, value him as thy life, and follow on to know him; and thou ſhalt know incomparably more than this. Of if I do but renew thy grief, to tell thee what thou once didſt feel, but now haſt loſt; I counſel thee to *remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the firſt works, and be watchful, and ſtrengthen the things which remain*: and I dare promiſe thee, (becauſe God hath promiſed) thou ſhalt ſee and know that which here thine eye could not ſee, nor thy underſtanding conceive. Believe me, Chriſtians, yea believe God; you that have known moſt of God in Chriſt here, it is as nothing to that you ſhall know; it ſcarce, in compariſon of that, deſerves to be called knowledge. The difference betwixt our knowledge now, and our knowledge then, will be as great as that between our fleſhly bodies now, and our ſpiritual bodies then. For as theſe bodies, ſo that knowledge muſt ceaſe, that a more perfect may ſucceed. Our ſilly, childiſh thoughts of God, which now is the higheſt we can reach to, muſt give place to a more manly knowledge.

Marvel not therefore, how it can be *life eternal to know* God, *and his Son* Jeſus Chriſt: to enjoy God and his Chriſt is eternal Life, and the Soul's enjoying is in knowing. They that ſavour only of earth, and have no way to judge but by ſenſe, and never were acquainted with this knowledge of God, think it a poor happineſs to know God. Let them have health and wealth, and worldly delights, and take you the other. Alas, poor men! they that have made trial of both, do not envy your happineſs: O that you would come near and taſte and try as they have done, and then judge; then continue in your former mind, if you can. For our parts, we ſay with that knowing Apoſtle, (tho' the ſpeech may ſeem preſumptuous) 1 John v. 19. 20. *We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedneſs. And we know that the Son, of God is come, and hath*

given

given us an underſtanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, in his Son Jeſus Chriſt. This is the true God, and eternal life. The Son of God is come, to be our head and fountain of life, *and hath given us an underſtanding* that the ſoul may be made capable *to know Him* (God) *that is true,* the prime truth; *and we are* brought ſo near in this enjoyment, that *we are in him that is true*: we are in Him, by being *in his Son Jeſus Chriſt: This is the true God,* and ſo the fitteſt object for our underſtanding, *and* this knowing of him, and being in him, in *Chriſt, is eternal life.*

And doubtleſs the memory will not be idle in this bleſſed work. If it be but by looking back, to help the ſoul to value its enjoyment. Our knowledge will be enlarged, not diminiſhed; therefore the knowledge of things paſt ſhall not be taken away. From that height, the ſaint can look behind him and before him: and to compare paſt with preſent things, muſt needs raiſe in the bleſſed ſoul an unconceivable ſenſe of its condition. To ſtand on that mount, whence we can ſee the wilderneſs and *Canaan* both at once; to ſtand in heaven, and look back on earth, and weigh them together in the balance, how muſt it tranſport the ſoul, and make it cry out, Is this the purchaſe that coſt ſo dear as the blood of God? O bleſſed price, and thrice bleſſed love! Is this the end of believing? Is this the end of the Spirit's workings? Have the gales of grace blown me into ſuch an harbour? Is it hither that Chriſt hath enticed my ſoul? O bleſſed way, and thrice bleſſed end! Is this the glory which the ſcriptures ſpoke of, and miniſters preached of ſo much? Now I ſee the goſpel indeed is good tidings, even *Tidings of great joy to all nations!* Is my mourning, my faſting, my heavy walking, groanings, complainings, come to this? Are all my afflictions and fears, all Satan's temptations and the world's ſcorns come to this? O vile nature, that reſiſteth ſuch a bleſſing! Unworthy ſoul!

ſoul! Is this the place thou cameſt ſo unwillingly to? Was the world too good to loſe? Didſt thou ſtick at leaving all, denying all, and ſuffering any thing for this? O falſe heart! that had almoſt betrayed me to eternal flames, and loſt me this glory! O baſe fleſh! that would needs have been pleaſed though to the loſs of this felicity! Didſt thou make me to queſtion the truth of this glory? Didſt thou draw me to diſturb the Lord? My Soul, art thou not aſhamed that ever thou didſt queſtion that love that hath brought thee hither? That thou waſt jealous of the faithfulneſs of thy Lord? That thou ſuſpectedſt his love, when thou ſhouldeſt have only ſuſpected thyſelf? That thou didſt not live continually tranſported with thy Saviour's love? And that ever thou quenchedſt a motion of his Spirit? Art thou not aſhamed of all thy hard thoughts of ſuch a God? Of all thy miſ-interpreting thoſe providences, and repining at thoſe ways that have ſuch an end? Now thou art convinced, that the ways thou calledſt hard, and the cup thou calledſt bitter, were neceſſary: that thy Lord meant thee better than thou wouldſt believe: and that thy Redeemer was ſaving thee, as well when he croſſed thy deſires, as when he granted them; as well when he broke thy heart, as when he bound it up. No thanks to thee, for this crown: but *to Jehovah and the Lamb for ever!*

Thus, as the memory of the wicked will eternally promote their torment, to look back on the ſin committed, the grace refuſed, Chriſt neglected, and time loſt: ſo will the memory of the ſaints for ever promote their joys.

But O the full, the near, the ſweet enjoyment, is that of the affections, love and joy: it is near, for love is the eſſence of the ſoul, and love is the eſſence of God. *God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* The acting of this affection whereſoever, carrieth much delight with it: eſpecially when the object appears deſerving, and the affection is ſtrong. But what

will it be, when perfect affections ſhall have the ſtrongeſt perfect acting upon the moſt perfect object! Now the poor ſoul complains, O that I could love Chriſt more! but I cannot, alas, I cannot: yea, but then thou canſt not chooſe but love him! I had almoſt ſaid, forbear if thou canſt. Now thou knoweſt little of his amiableneſs, and therefore loveſt little: then thine eye will effect thy heart, and the continual viewing of that perfect beauty, will keep thee in continual raviſhments of love. Now thy ſalvation is not perfected, nor all the mercies purchaſed, yet given in; but when *the Top ſtone is ſet on, thou ſhalt with ſhoutings cry, grace, grace!* Chriſtians, doth it now ſtir up your love, to remember all the experiences of his love; to look back upon a life of mercies! Doth not kindneſs melt you? And the ſun-ſhine of divine goodneſs warm your frozen hearts? What will it do then, when you ſhall live in love, and have all in him, who is all? O the high delights of love! of this love! The content that the heart findeth in it! The ſatisfaction it brings along with it! Surely love is both work and wages.

And if this were all, what a high favour that God will give us leave to love him! That he will vouchaſe to be embraced by ſuch arms that have embraced ſin before him! But this is not all. He returned love for love: nay, a thouſand times more: as perfect as we ſhall be, we cannot reach his meaſure of love. Chriſtian, thou wilt then be brim-full of love; yet love as much as thou canſt, thou ſhalt be ten thouſand times more beloved. Doſt thou think thou canſt over-love Him? What, love more than love itſelf! Were the arms of the Son of God open upon the croſs, and an open paſſage made to his heart by the ſpear? And will not his arms and heart be open to thee in glory? Did he begin to love before thou loveſt, and will he not continue now? Did he love thee an enemy? thee a ſinner? thee who even loatheſt thyſelf? and own

thee

thee when thou didſt diſclaim thyſelf? and will he not now unmeaſurably love thee a ſon? thee a perfect ſaint; thee who returneſt love for love? Thou waſt wont injuriouſly to queſtion his love: doubt of it now if thou canſt. As the pains of hell will convince the rebellious ſinner of God's wrath, who would never before believe it: ſo the joys of heaven will convince thee thoroughly of that love which thou wouldſt ſo hardly be perſuaded of. He that in love wept over the old *Jeruſalem* near her ruins; with what love will he rejoice over the new *Jeruſalem* in her glory? Methinks I ſee him groaning and weeping over dead *Lazarus*, till he forced the *Jews* that ſtood by to ſay, *Behold how he loved him*! Will he not then much more, by rejoicing over us, make all (even the damned, if they ſee it) ſay, *Behold how he loveth them*!

Here is the heaven of heavens! the fruition of God: in theſe mutual embracements of love, doth it conſiſt. To love and be beloved: *Theſe are the everlaſting arms that are underneath: his left hand is under their heads, and with his right hand doth he embrace them.*

Stop here and think a while what a ſtate this is. Is it a ſmall thing to be beloved of God? To be the ſon, the ſpouſe, the love, the delight of the King of Glory? Believe this, and think on it: thou ſhalt be eternally embraced in the arms of that love which was from everlaſting and will extend to everlaſting; of that love, which brought the Son of God's love from heaven to earth, from earth to the croſs, from the croſs to the grave, from the grave to glory: that love which was weary, hungry, tempted, ſcorned, ſcourged, buffeted, ſpit upon, crucified, pierced; which did faſt, pray, teach, heal, weep, ſweat, bleed, die: that love will eternally embrace them. When perfect, created love, and moſt perfect, uncreated love meet together, O the bleſſed meeting! It will not be like *Joſeph* and his brethren, who lay upon one another's necks weeping: it

will break forth into pure joy; not a mixture of joy and ſorrow: it will be loving and rejoicing, not loving and ſorrowing: yet will it make *Pharaoh's (Satan's)* court to ring, with the news, that *Joſeph's* brethren are come; that the ſaints are arrived ſafe at the boſom of Chriſt, out of the reach of hell for ever.

And now are we not left in the Apoſtle's admiration? *What ſhall we ſay to theſe things?* Infinite love muſt needs be a myſtery to a finite capacity. No wonder, if angels deſire to pry into the myſtery; and if it be the ſtudy of the ſaints here, *to know the height, and breadth, and length, and depth of this love, though it paſſeth knowledge:* this is the Saints Reſt in the fruition of God by love.

Laſtly, The affection of Joy hath not the leaſt ſhare in this fruition. The inconceivable complacency which the bleſſed feel in their ſeeing, knowing, loving, and being beloved of God. The delight of the ſenſes here, cannot be known by expreſſions, as they are felt: how much leſs this joy? this is *the white ſtone which none knoweth, but he that receiveth:* and if there be any joy which the ſtranger meddleth not with, then ſurely this above all, is it. All Chriſt's ways of mercy tend to, and end in the Saint's joys. He wept, ſorrowed, ſuffered, that they might rejoice; he ſendeth the Spirit to be their comforter. He multiplieth promiſes. He diſcovers their future happineſs, that their joy might be full; he abundeth to them in mercies of all ſorts: *He maketh them to lie down in green paſtures, and leadeth them by the ſtill waters:* yea, *openeth to them the fountain of living waters, that their joy may be full, that they may thirſt no more, and that it may ſpring up in them to everlaſting life*; he cauſeth them to ſuffer, that he may cauſe them to rejoice; and chaſteneth them that he may give them reſt; and maketh them (as he did himſelf) *to drink of the brook in the way, that they may lift up the head*, Pſalm cx. 7. And leſt after all this they ſhould neglect their own comforts,

forts, he maketh it their duty, commanding them *to rejoice in him always.* And he never brings them into ſo low a condition, wherein he leaves them not more cauſe of joy than of ſorrow. And hath the Lord ſuch a care for us here; where the bridegroom being from us we muſt mourn? O! what will that joy be, where the ſoul being perfectly prepared for joy, and joy prepared by Chriſt for the ſoul, it ſhall be our work or buſineſs, eternally to rejoice?

And it ſeems the Saints' joy ſhall be greater than the damned's torment: for their torment is the torment of creatures, *prepared for the devil and his angels*; but our joy is *the joy of our Lord*, even our Lord's own joy ſhall we enter. *And the ſame glory which the Father giveth him, doth the Son give them*, John xvii. 22. *And to ſit down with him on his throne, even as he is ſet down on his Father's throne*, Rev. iii. 21. Thou that now ſpendeſt thy days in ſorrow, who knoweſt no garments but ſackcloth, no food but the bread and water of afflictions, what ſayeſt thou to this great change? From all ſorrow to more than all joy! Thou poor ſoul, who prayeſt for joy, complaineſt for want of joy, then thou ſhalt have full joy, as much as thou canſt hold, and more than ever thou thoughteſt on, or thy heart deſired.

And in the mean time, walk carefully, watch conſtantly, and then let God meaſure out thy times and degrees of joy. It may be he keeps them till thou haſt more need: thou mayeſt better loſe thy comfort, than thy ſafety: as the joy of the hypocrite, ſo the fears of the upright, are but for a moment. *Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.* O bleſſed morning! Poor drooping ſoul, how would it fill thee with joy now, if a voice from heaven ſhould aſſure thee of thy part in theſe joys? What then will thy joys be, when thy actual poſſeſſion ſhall convince thee of thy title: when the angels ſhall bring thee to Chriſt, and when Chriſt ſhall (as it

were) take thee by the hand and lead thee into thy purchaſed poſſeſſion! Wilt thou not be almoſt ready to draw back, and to ſay, What I, Lord! I, the unworthy neglecter of thy grace! I the unworthy diſtroyer of thy blood, and ſlighter of thy love! Muſt I have this glory? *Make me an hired ſervant, I am no more worthy to be called a ſon*; but love will have it ſo: therefore muſt thou enter into his joy.

And it is not thy joy only: it is a mutual joy, as well as mutual love. Is there ſuch joy in heaven at thy converſion, and will there be none at thy glorification! Will not the angels welcome thee thither, and congratulate thy ſafe arrival? Yea, it is the joy of Jeſus Chriſt: for now he hath the end of his labour, ſuffering, dying, when we have our joys; *when he is glorified in his ſaints, and admired in all them that believe. We are his ſeed, and the fruit of his ſoul's travail, which when he ſeeth, he will be ſatisfied*: he will rejoice over his purchaſed inheritance, and his people ſhall rejoice in him.

Yea, the Father himſelf puts on joy too, in our joy: as we grieve his Spirit, and weary him, with our iniquities; ſo he is rejoiced in our good. O how quickly here doth he ſpy a returning prodigal, even afar off? How doth he run and meet him, fall on his neck, and kiſs him? This is indeed a happy meeting: but nothing to the joy of that laſt and great meeting.

And now look back upon all this: I ſay to thee, as the angel to John, *What haſt thou ſeen?* Or, if yet thou perceive not, draw nearer, come up higher, *Come and ſee;* doſt thou fear thou haſt been all this while in a dream! Why, *Theſe are the true ſayings of God.* Doſt thou fear (as the diſciples) that thou haſt ſeen but a ghoſt inſtead of Chriſt? A ſhadow inſtead of Reſt? Come near, and feel: a ſhadow contains not thoſe ſubſtantial bleſſings, nor reſts upon ſuch a ſure word of promiſe, as you have ſeen theſe do. Go thy way now, and tell the diſciples, and tell the drooping

drooping ſouls thou meeteſt with, that thou haſt, in this glaſs, ſeen heaven; that *the Lord indeed is riſen, and hath here appeared to thee*: and behold he is gone before us into reſt; and that he is now preparing a place for them, and will come again, and take them to himſelf, that *where he is, there they may be alſo.*

But alas! my fearful heart dares ſcarce proceed: methinks I hear the Almighty's voice, ſaying to me, as to *Elihu*, Job xxxviii. 2, *Who is this that darkeneth counſel by words without knowledge?*

But pardon, O Lord, thy ſervant's ſin: I have not pried into unrevealed things, not curiouſly ſearched into thy counſels; but indeed I have diſhonoured thy holineſs, wronged thine excellency, diſgraced thy ſaints' glory, by my diſproportionable pourtraying: I will bewail from my heart, that my apprehenſions are ſo dull, my thoughts ſo mean, my affections ſo ſtupid, and my expreſſions ſo low. But I have only heard by the hearing of the ear: O let thy ſervant ſee thee and poſſeſs theſe joys, and then I ſhall have more ſuitable conceivings, and ſhall give thee fuller glory. *I have now uttered that I underſtood not; things too wonderful for me, which I know not. Yet I believed, and therefore ſpake.* Remember with whom thou haſt to do: what canſt thou expect from duſt, from corruption, but defilement? Our foul hands will leave, where they touch, the marks of their uncleanneſs: and moſt on thoſe things that are moſt pure. *I know thou wilt be ſanctified in them that come nigh thee, and before all the people thou wilt be glorified:* and if thy jealouſy excluded from that land of reſt, thy ſervants *Moſes* and *Aaron*, becauſe they ſanctified thee not in the midſt of Iſrael; what then may I expect? But though the weakneſs be the fruit of my own corruption: yet the fire is from thine altar, and the work of thy commanding. I looked not into thine ark, nor put forth my hand unto it with-

out thee. O therefore waſh away theſe ſtains alſo in the blood of the Lamb.

CHAP. IV.

The four great Preparatives to our Reſt.

HAVING thus ſhewed you a ſmall glimpſe of that reſemblance of the Saints' Reſt, which I had ſeen in the goſpel-glaſs; it follows, that we proceed to view a little the bleſſed Properties of this Reſt. And why doth my trembling heart draw back? Surely the Lord is not now ſo inacceſſible, nor the way ſo blocked up, as when the law and curſe reigned. Wherefore, finding the flaming ſword removed, I ſhall look again into the paradiſe of our God.

And firſt, Let us conſider the great preparations: for the porch of this temple is exceeding glorious. Let us obſerve,

1. The moſt glorious coming of the Son of God.

2. His raiſing our bodies, and uniting them again with the ſoul.

3. His ſolemn proceedings in their judgment, where they ſhall be juſtified before all the world.

4. His enthroning them in glory.

1. And well may the coming of Chriſt be reckoned with thoſe ingredients that compound this precious Reſt: for to this end it is intended; and to this end it is of apparent neceſſity. For his

his people's ſake he ſanctified himſelf to his office: for their ſake he came into the world, ſuffered, died, roſe, aſcended: and for their ſake it is that he will return. To this end will Chriſt come again to receive his people to himſelf, *that where He is they may be alſo*, John xiv. 3. He that would come to ſuffer, will ſurely come to triumph: and he that would come to purchaſe, will ſurely come to poſſeſs.

But why ſtayed he not with his people while he was here? Why? Muſt not the Comforter be ſent? Was not the work on earth done? Muſt he not receive the recompenſe of reward, and enter into his glory? Muſt he not take poſſeſſion in our behalf? Muſt he not go to prepare a place for us? Muſt he not intercede with the Father, and plead his ſufferings, and be filled with the Spirit to ſend it forth, and receive authority to ſubdue his enemies? Our abode here is ſhort: if He had ſtayed on earth, what would it have been to enjoy him for a few days, and then die? But he hath more in heaven to dwell among; even the Spirits of the Juſt of many generations there made perfect. O what a day will that be, when we who have been kept priſoner by the grave, ſhall be fetched out by the Lord himſelf: when Chriſt ſhall come from heaven to plead with his enemies, and ſet his captives free? It will not be ſuch a coming as his *firſt* was, in meanneſs, and poverty, and contempt: he will not come to be ſpit upon and buffeted, and ſcorned, and crucified again; he will not come, O careleſs world, to be ſlighted by you any more. And yet that coming, which was in infirmity and reproach for our ſakes, wanted not its glory. If the angels of heaven muſt be the meſſengers of that coming, as being *tidings of joy to all people*: and the heavenly hoſt muſt accompany his nativity, and muſt praiſe God with that ſolemnity: O with what ſhoutings will angels and ſaints at that day proclaim, *Glory to God, and*

peace and good-will towards men! If the ſtars in heaven muſt lead men to come to worſhip a child in a manger, how will the glory of his next appearing conſtrain all the world to acknowledge his ſovereignty? If when he was in the form of a ſervant, they cried out, *What manner of man is this, that both wind and ſea obey him?* What ſhall they ſay when they ſhall ſee him coming in his glory, and the heavens and earth obey him? *Then ſhall appear the ſign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then ſhall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they ſhall ſee the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.*

This coming of Chriſt is frequently mentioned in the Prophets, as the great ſupport of his people's ſpirits till then. And whenever the Apoſtles would quicken to duty, or encourage to patient waiting, they uſually did it by mentioning Chriſt's coming. Why then do we not uſe more this cordial conſideration, whenever we want ſupport and comfort? Shall the wicked and profane with inconceivable horror behold him and cry out, Yonder is he whoſe blood we neglected, whoſe grace we reſiſted, whoſe government we caſt off! And ſhall not the ſaints, with inconceivable gladneſs, cry out, Yonder is he whoſe blood redeemed us, whoſe ſpirit cleanſed us! Yonder comes he in whom we truſted, and now we ſee he hath not deceived our truſt: he for whom we long waited, and now we ſee we have not waited in vain. Oh how ſhould it then be the character of a Chriſtian, *To wait for the Son of God from heaven, whom he raiſed from the dead, even* Jeſus *which delivered us from the wrath to come?* 1 Theſ. i. 10. And with all faithful diligence to prepare to meet our Lord with joy. And ſeeing his coming is of purpoſe *to be glorified in his Saints, and admired in all them that believe.* What thought ſhould glad our hearts more than the thought of that day? A little while indeed we have not

ſeen

ſeen him, but yet a little while and we ſhall ſee him, for he hath ſaid, *I will not leave you comfortleſs, but will come unto you.* We were comfortleſs, ſhould he not come. And while we daily gaze and look up to heaven after him, let us remember what the angels ſaid, *This ſame Jeſus which is taken up from you into heaven, ſhall ſo come in like manner, as ye have ſeen him go into heaven.* Let every Chriſtian, that heareth and readeth, ſay *Come;* and our Lord himſelf ſaith, *Surely, I come quickly. Amen. Even* ſo, come Lord Jeſus.

The ſecond ſtream that leadeth to paradiſe, is that great work of Jeſus Chriſt, in raiſing our bodies from the duſt, uniting them again unto the ſoul. What, ſaith the Atheiſt, Shall all theſe ſcattered bones and duſt become a man? Thou fool, doſt thou diſpute againſt the power of the Almighty? Doſt thou object difficulties to infinite ſtrength, Thou blind mole: Thou little piece of creeping, breathing clay. But come thy way, let me take thee by the hand, and with reverence (as *Elihu*) plead for God; and for that power whereby I hope to riſe. Seeſt thou this great maſſy body of the earth? Upon what foundation doth it ſtand? Seeſt thou this vaſt ocean of waters? What limits them, and why do they not overflow and drown the earth? Whence is that conſtant ebbing and flowing of her tides? Wilt thou ſay, from the moon or other planets? And whence have they that influence? Muſt thou not come to a Cauſe of cauſes, that can do all things? And doth not reaſon require thee, to conceive of that Cauſe as a perfect intelligence, and voluntary agent, and not ſuch a blind worker and empty notion as that nothing is, which thou calleſt nature! What thinkeſt thou? is not that power able to effect thy reſurrection, which doth all this? Is it not as eaſy to raiſe the dead, as to make heaven and earth, and all out of nothing? But if thou be unperſuadable, all

I ſay to thee more is as the prophet to the prince of *Samaria* (2 Kings vii. 19.) *Thou ſhalt ſee that day with thine eyes*, but little to thy comfort: for that which is the day of relief to the Saints, ſhall be a day of revenge on thee.

Come then, fellow-chriſtians, let us commit theſe carcaſes to the duſt: that priſon ſhall not long contain them. Let us lie down in peace and take our reſt: it will not be an everlaſting night, nor endleſs ſleep. What if we go out of the troubles and ſtirs of the world, and enter into thoſe chambers of duſt, and the doors be ſhut upon us, and we hide ourſelves, as it were, for a little moment, *until the indignation be overpaſt*? Yet, *behold the Lord cometh out of his place, to puniſh the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity*: and then the earth ſhall diſcloſe us, and the duſt ſhall hide us no more. As ſure as we awake in the morning, when we have ſlept out the night, ſo ſure ſhall we then awake.

Lay down then cheerfully this lump of corruption: thou ſhalt undoubtedly receive it again in incorruption. Lay down freely this terreſtrial, this natural body: thou ſhalt receive it again a celeſtial, a ſpiritual body. Tho' thou lay it down with great diſhonour, thou ſhalt receive it in glory: and though thou art ſeparated from it thro' weakneſs, it ſhall be raiſed again in mighty power. When the trumpet of God ſhall ſound the call, *Come away: Riſe ye Dead;* who ſhall then ſtay behind? Who can reſiſt the powerful command of our Lord?—When He ſhall call to the Earth and Sea, *O Earth, O Sea, give up thy Dead*! the firſt that ſhall be called are the ſaints that ſleep; and then the ſaints that are alive ſhall be changed. For *they which are alive and remain till the coming of the Lord ſhall not prevent them which are aſleep. For the* Lord *himſelf ſhall deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the Dead in* Chriſt *ſhall riſe firſt. Then they which are alive, and remain,*

remain, ſhall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord. Triumph now, O Chriſtian in theſe promiſes: thou ſhalt ſhortly triumph in their performance. For this is the day that the Lord will make; *We ſhall be glad and rejoice therein.* The grave that could not keep our Lord, cannot keep us: he aroſe for us, and by the ſame power will cauſe us to ariſe. *For if we believe that Jeſus died, and roſe again; even ſo them alſo which ſlept in Jeſus, will God bring with him.* Therefore let our hearts be glad, and our glory rejoice, and our fleſh alſo reſt in hope; for he will not leave us in the grave, nor ſuffer us ſtill to ſee corruption. Yea, *therefore, let us be ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as we know our labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

The third part of this prologue to the Saints Reſt, is the ſolemn proceſs at their judgment, where they ſhall firſt themſelves be juſtified; and then with Chriſt judge the world. All the world muſt there appear, young and old, of all eſtates and nations, that ever were from the creation to that day. The judgment ſhall be ſet, and the books opened, and the book of life produced; *and the dead ſhall be judged out of thoſe things, which were written in the books, according to their works, and whoſoever is not found written in the Book of life, is caſt into the lake of fire.* O terrible! O joyful day! Terrible to thoſe that have not watched, but forgot the coming of their Lord! Joyful to the Saints, whoſe waiting and hope was to ſee this day! then ſhall the world behold the goodneſs and ſeverity of the Lord: on them who periſh, Severity; but to his choſen, Goodneſs. When every one muſt give account of his ſtewardſhip, and every talent of time, health, wit, mercies, affliction, means, warnings, muſt be reckoned for. When the ſins of youth, and thoſe which they had forgotten, and their ſecret ſins ſhall all

be

be laid open before angels and men: when they ſhall ſee all their friends, wealth, old delights, all their confidence and falſe hopes forſake them. When they ſhall ſee the Lord Jeſus whom they neglected, whoſe word they diſobeyed, whoſe miniſters they abuſed, whoſe ſervants they hated, now ſitting to judge them: when their own conſciences ſhall cry out againſt them, and call to their remembrance all their miſdoings. Remember at ſuch a time ſuch or ſuch a ſin; at ſuch a time Chriſt ſued hard for thy converſion; the miniſter preſſed it home to thy heart, thou waſt touched to the quick with the word; thou didſt purpoſe and promiſe returning, and yet thou didſt caſt off all. O which way will the wretched ſinner look! O who can conceive the thoughts of his heart? Now the world cannot help him; his old companions cannot help him; the ſaints neither can nor will; only the Lord Jeſus can: but there is the miſery, he will not: nay, without violating the truth of his word, he cannot; though otherwiſe, in regard of his abſolute power, he might. The time was, ſinners, when Chriſt would, and you would not; and now, fain would you, and he will not. What then remains, but to cry to the mountains, *Fall on us; and to the hills, cover us from the preſence of him that ſits upon the throne!* But all in vain! For thou haſt the Lord of mountains and hills for thine enemy, whoſe voice they will obey, and not thine. Sinner, make not ſlight of this; for as thou liveſt (except a thorough change prevent it) thou ſhalt ſhortly to thy unconceivable horror ſee that day.

Poor, careleſs ſinner, I did not think here to have ſaid ſo much to thee: but if theſe lines fall into thy hands, *I charge thee before* God, *and the* Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *who ſhall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom*: that thou make haſte and get alone, and ſet thyſelf ſadly to ponder

ponder theſe things! aſk thy heart, is this true, or is it not? Is there ſuch a day, and muſt I ſee it? What do I then? Is it not time, full time, that I had made ſure of Chriſt and comfort long ago? Should I ſit ſtill another day, who have loſt ſo many? Friend, I profeſs to thee, from the word of the Lord, that of all thy ſweet ſins, there will then be nothing left, but the ſting in thy conſcience, which will be never out through all eternity.

But why trembleſt thou, O gracious ſoul? He that would not overlook one *Lot* in *Sodom*: nay, that could do nothing till he went forth; Will he forget thee at that day? *Thy* Lord *knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation and to reſerve the unjuſt to the day of judgment to be puniſhed:* he knoweth how to make the ſame day the greateſt terror to his foes, and yet the greateſt joy to his people. *There is no condemnation to them that are in* Chriſt Jeſus, *who walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit.* And, *who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of* God's *Elect?* Shall the Law? Why. *Whatſoever the law ſaith, it ſaith to them that are under the law; but we are not under the law, but under grace: for the law of the ſpirit of life, which is in* Chriſt Jeſus, *hath made us free from the law of ſin and death!* Or ſhall Conſcience? We were long ago *juſtified by faith, and ſo have peace with God, and have our hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience; and the Spirit bearing witneſs with our ſpirits, that we are the children of* God. *It is* God *that juſtifieth, who ſhall condemn?* If our judge condemn us not, who ſhall? He that ſaid to the adulterous woman, *Hath no man condemned thee? Neither do I condemn thee:* he will ſay to us, (more faithfully than *Peter* to him) *Tho' all men deny thee or condemn thee, I will not. Thou haſt confeſſed me before men, and I will confeſs thee before my Father, and the angels in heaven.*

What inexpreſſible joy may this afford a believer! Our dear Lord ſhall be our Judge! will

will a man fear to be judged by his deareſt friend, by a brother, by a father; or a wife by her own huſband? Did he come down, and ſuffer, and weep, and bleed, and die, for thee—and will he now condemn thee? Was he judged, and condemned, and executed in thy ſtead, and now will he condemn thee? Hath it coſt him ſo dear to ſave thee? And will he now deſtroy thee? Hath he done the moſt of the work already, in juſtifying, preſerving, and perfecting thee? and will he now undo all again? O what an unpardonable ſin is Unbelief, that will charge our Lord with ſuch abſurdities? Well then, fellow Chriſtians, let the terror of that day be never ſo great, our Lord can mean no ill to us in all. Let it make the devils tremble; and the wicked tremble; but it ſhall make us leap for joy. And it muſt needs affect us deeply with the ſenſe of our mercy and happineſs, to behold the contrary condition of others. To ſee moſt of the world tremble with terror, while we triumph with joy; to ſee them thruſt into hell, when we are proclaimed heirs of the kingdom; to ſee our neighbours, that lived in the ſame towns, came to the ſame congregations, dwelt in the ſame houſes, and were eſteemed more honourable in the world than ourſelves; now ſo differenced from us, and by the Searcher of hearts eternally ſeparated. This, with the great magnificence and dreadfulneſs of the day, doth the Apoſtle pathetically expreſs, in 2 Theſſ. i. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. *It is righteous with God to recompenſe tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, reſt with us; when the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.* And now is not here enough to make that day a welcome day, and the thoughts of it delightful to us? But yet there

there is more. We ſhall be ſo far from the dread of that judgment, that ourſelves ſhall become the judges. Chriſt will take his people, as it were into commiſſion with him; and they ſhall ſit and approve his righteous judgment.

Do you not know that the ſaints ſhall judge the world? Nay, *Know you not that we ſhall judge angels?* Surely, were it not the word of Chriſt that ſpeaks it, this advancement would ſeem incredible, yet even *Enoch* the ſeventh from *Adam* propheſied of this, ſaying, *Behold the Lord cometh, with ten thouſand of his ſaints, to execute judgment upon all: and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed; and of all their hard ſpeeches, which ungodly ſinners have ſpoke againſt him,* Jude 14, &c. Thus ſhall the Saints be honoured, and the *righteous have dominion in the morning.* O that the careleſs world were *but wiſe to conſider this,* and *that they would conſider their latter end!* That they would be now of the ſame mind, as they will be when they ſhall ſee the *heavens paſs away with a noiſe, and the elements melt with fervent heat: the earth alſo, and the works that are therein be burnt up?* When all ſhall be on fire about their ears and all earthly glory conſumed. *For the heavens and the earth which are now, are reſerved unto fire againſt the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men. Seeing then all theſe things ſhall be diſſolved, what manner of perſons ought ye to be in all holy converſation and godlineſs: Looking for, and haſting to the coming of the day of God: wherein the heavens being on fire, ſhall be diſſolved, and the elements melt with fervent heat.*

The fourth antecedent to the Saints advancement is, their ſolemn coronation, and receiving into the kingdom. For as Chriſt, their head, is anointed both king and prieſt; ſo under him are his people made unto God both kings and prieſts: *To reign, and to offer praiſes for ever,* Rev. v. 10. *The crown of righteouſneſs, which*

was

was laid up for them, ſhall by the Lord, the righteous judge, be given them at that day, 2 Tim. iv. 8. *They have been faithful to the death, and therefore ſhall receive the crown of life*: and according to the improvement of talents here, ſo ſhall their rule and dignity be enlarged. So that they are not dignified with empty titles, but real dominions. For *Chriſt will take them and ſet them down with himſelf, on his own throne: and will give them power over the nations, even as he received of his Father. And will give them the morning ſtar.* The Lord himſelf will give them poſſeſſion with theſe applauding expreſſions; *Well done, good and faithful ſervant, thou haſt been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; Enter thou into the joy of thy* Lord. And with this ſolemn and bleſſed proclamation ſhall he enthrone them; *Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world.* Every word is full of life and joy. [*Come!*] This is the holding forth of the golden ſceptre; to warrant our approach unto this glory. Come now as near as you will: fear not the *Bethſhemite's* judgment: for the enmity is utterly taken away. This is not ſuch a *Come* as we were wont to hear, *Come take up your croſs, and follow me*: though that was ſweet, yet this is much more. [*Ye bleſſed*] Bleſſed indeed, when that mouth ſhall ſo pronounce us. For though the world hath accounted us accurſed, yet certainly thoſe that he bleſſeth are bleſſed: and thoſe whom he curſeth, only are curſed: and his bleſſing ſhall not be revoked. But he hath bleſſed us, and it ſhall not be revoked. But he hath bleſſed us, and we ſhall be bleſſed. [*Of my Father*] Bleſſed in the Father's love, as well as the Son's: for they are one: the Father hath teſtified his love, in ſending Chriſt, accepting his ranſom; as the Son hath alſo teſtified his. [*Inherit*] No longer bond-men, nor ſervants only, nor children under age, who differ not in poſſeſſion, but only in the title, from ſervants: but, now we are *heirs of the kingdom, co-heirs with Chriſt.*

[*The*

[*The kingdom*] No leſs than the kingdom! Indeed to be King of kings, and Lord of lords, is our Lord's own title: but to be kings and reign with him, is ours: the fruition of this kingdom, is as the fruition of the light of the ſun, each hath the whole, and the reſt nevertheleſs. [*Prepared for you*] God is the *Alpha*, as well as the *Omega* of our bleſſedneſs. Eternal love hath laid the foundation. He prepared the kingdom for us, and then prepared us for the kingdom. This is the preparation of his counſel: for the execution whereof Chriſt was yet to make a further preparation [*For you*] Nor for believers only in general, but for you in particular. [*From the foundation of the world.*] Not only from the promiſe after *Adam's* fall, but from eternity.

But a difficulty ariſeth in our way. In what ſenſe is our improvement of our talent, our well-doing, our overcoming, our labouring, viſiting, feeding Chriſt in his little ones, alledged as a reaſon of our coronation and glory? Is it not the purchaſed poſſeſſion, and mere fruit of Chriſt's blood? If every man muſt be judged according to his works, and receive according to what they have done in the fleſh, whether good or evil; if God *will render to every man according to his deeds*, Rom. ii. 6, 7. And give eternal life to all men, if they patiently continue in well-doing; if he will give right to the tree of life, Rev. xxii. 14. and entrance into the city, to the doers of his commandments; and if this laſt abſolving ſentence be the compleating of our juſtification; and ſo *the doers of the law be juſtified*, Rom. ii. 13. Then, what is become of free-grace? Or juſtification by faith only? Or the ſole righteouſneſs of Chriſt to make us accepted? I anſwer,

1. Let not the names of men draw thee one way or another, or make thee partial in ſearching for the truth; but call not doctrine unſound, becauſe it is theirs; nor ſound becauſe of the repute of the writer.

2. Know this, That as an unhumbled ſoul is far

far apter to give too much to duty and perſonal righteouſneſs, than to Chriſt; ſo an humble, ſelf-denying Chriſtian is as likely to err on the other hand, in giving leſs to duty than Chriſt hath given, and laying all the work from himſelf on Chriſt, for fear of robbing Chriſt of the honour; and ſo much to look at Chriſt without him, and think he ſhould look at nothing in himſelf; that he forgets Chriſt within him.

3. Our giving to Chriſt more of the work than ſcripture doth, or rather our aſcribing it to him out of the ſcripture way, doth but diſhonour, and not honour him; and depreſs, but not exalt his free grace: while we deny the inward ſanctifying work of his ſpirit, and extol his free juſtification, which are equal fruits of his merit, we make him an imperfect ſaviour.

4. But to arrogate to ourſelves any part of Chriſt's prerogative, is moſt deſperate of all, and no doctrine more directly overthrows the goſpel, than that of juſtification by the merits of our own, or by works of the law.

Aud thus we have ſeen the Chriſtian ſafely landed in paradiſe; and conveyed honourably to his Reſt. Now let us a little further view thoſe manſions, conſider his privileges, and ſee whether there be any glory like unto this glory.

CHAP. IV.

The Excellencies of our Reſt.

LET us ſee more immediately from the pure fountain of the ſcriptures what further excellencies

cellencies this Reſt affordeth. And the Lord hide us in the clifts of the rock, and cover us with the hands of indulgent grace, while we approach to take this view!

And firſt, it is a moſt ſingular honour of the Saints Reſt, to be called the *purchaſed poſſeſſion*; that it is the fruit of the blood of the Son of God; yea, the chief fruit: yea, the end and perfection of all the fruits of that blood. Surely Love is the moſt precious ingredient in the whole compoſition; and of all the flowers that grow in the garden of love, can there be brought one more ſweet than this blood? Greater love than this there is not, to lay down the life of the lover. And to have this our Redeemer ever before our eyes, and the livelieſt ſenſe and freſheſt remembrance of that dying, bleeding love ſtill upon our ſouls; Oh how will it fill our ſouls with perpetual raviſhments, to think that in the ſtreams of this blood, we have ſwam through the violence of the world, the ſnares of Satan, the ſeducements of fleſh, the curſe of the law, the wrath of an offended God, the accuſations of a guilty conſcience, and the doubts and fears of an unbelieving heart, and are paſſed thro' all, and arrived ſafely at the breaſt of God! Now we are ſtupified with vile and ſenſeleſs hearts, that can hear all the ſtory of this love, and read all the ſufferings of love; and all with dulneſs, and unaffectedneſs. He cries to us, *Behold and ſee, Is it nothing to you, O all ye that paſs by? Is there any ſorrow like unto my ſorrow?* And we will ſcarce hear or regard the voice; or turn aſide to view the wounds of him who healed our wounds at ſo dear a rate. But oh, then our perfected ſouls will feel as well as hear, and with feeling apprehenſions flame in love for love. Now we ſet his picture wounded and dying before our eyes, but can get it no nearer our hearts, than if we believed nothing of what we read. But then, when the obſtructions between the eye and the underſtanding are taken away, and the paſſage opened between the

the head and the heart, ſurely our eyes will everlaſtingly affect our heart! and while we view with one eye our ſlain-revived Lord, and with the other eye, our loſt-recovered ſouls, theſe views will eternally pierce us, and warm our very ſouls. And thoſe eyes through which folly hath ſo often ſtolen into our hearts, let in the love of our deareſt Lord for ever.

We ſhall then leave theſe hearts of ſtone and rock behind us, and the ſin that here ſo cloſe beſet us, and the ſottiſh unkindneſs that followed us ſo long, ſhall not be able to follow us into glory. But we ſhall behold, as it were, the wounds of love, with eyes and hearts of love for ever. Now his heart is open to us, and ours ſhut to him: but when his heart ſhall be open, and our hearts open, Oh the bleſſed congreſs that will then be! What a paſſionate meeting is there between our new-riſen Lord, and the firſt ſinful woman that he appears to! How doth love ſtruggle for expreſſions? And the ſtrained fire ſhut up in the breaſt, ſtrive to break forth? *Mary!* ſaith *Chriſt! Maſter!* ſaith *Mary!* and preſently ſhe claſps about his feet, having her heart as near to his heart as her hands were to his feet. What a meeting of love then will there be, between the new glorified ſaints, and the glorious Redeemer! But I am here at a loſs, my apprehenſions fail me, and fall too ſhort. Only this I know, it will be the ſingular praiſe of our inheritance, that it was bought with the price of that blood: and the ſingular joy of the ſaints, to behold the purchaſer and the price, together with the poſſeſſion: neither will the views of the wounds of love renew our wounds or ſorrow: he, whoſe firſt words after his reſurrection were to a great ſinner, *Woman, why weepeſt thou?* knows how to raiſe love and joy by all thoſe views, without raiſing any cloud of ſorrow. If a dying friend but deliver a token of his love, how carefully do we preſerve it, and ſtill remember him when we behold it, as if his own name were written on it? And will

not

not then the death and blood of our Lord everlaſtingly ſweeten our poſſeſſed glory? Well then, Chriſtians, as you uſe to do in your books, and on your goods, to write down the price they coſt you: ſo on your righteouſneſs, and on your glory, write down the price, *The precious blood of Chriſt.*

Yet underſtand this rightly: not that this higheſt glory was in the ſtricteſt ſenſe purchaſed, ſo as that it was the moſt immediate effect of Chriſt's death: we muſt take heed that we conceive not of God as a tyrant, who ſo delighteth in cruelty, as to exchange mercies for ſtripes. God was never ſo pleaſed with the ſufferings of the innocent, much leſs of his Son, as to ſell his mercy properly for their ſufferings. But the ſufferings of Chriſt were primarily and immediately to ſatisfy juſtice and to bear what was due to the ſinner, and ſo to reſtore him to the life he loſt, and the happineſs he fell from: but this dignity which ſurpaſſeth the firſt, is as it were, from the redundancy of his merit, or a ſecondary fruit of his death. The work of his redemption ſo well pleaſed the Father that he gave him power to advance his choſen to a higher dignity then they fell from; and to give them the glory which was given to himſelf; and all this according to the good pleaſure of his own will.

2. The ſecond *pearl in the Saint's diadem*, is that it is free. This ſeemeth as *Pharaoh's ſecond kine, to devour the former.* But the ſeeming diſcord is but a pleaſing diverſity which conſtitutes the melody. Theſe two attributes purchaſed and free, are the two chains of gold, which make up the wreath for the heads of the pillars in the temple of God. It was dear to Chriſt, but free to us. When Chriſt was to buy, ſilver and gold was nothing worth; prayers and tears could not ſuffice; nor any thing below his blood; but when we come to buy, our buying is but receiving: we have it freely *without money and without price.* Nor do the goſpel conditions make it the leſs free:

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if the goſpel conditions had been ſuch as are the law's, or payment of the debt required at our hands; the freeneſs then were more queſtionable. Yea, if God had ſaid to us [*Sinners, if you will ſatisfy my juſtice for one of your ſins, I will forgive you all the reſt,*] it would have been a hard condition on our part, and the grace of the covenant not ſo free, as our diſability doth require. But if all the condition be our cordial acceptance, ſurely we deſerve not the name of purchaſers. Thankful accepting of a free acquittance, is no paying of the debt. If life be offered to a condemned man, upon condition that he ſhall not refuſe the offer, the favour is nevertheleſs free. Nay though the condition were, that he ſhould beg, and wait before he have his pardon, and take him for his Lord who hath thus redeemed him, this is no ſatisfying the juſtice of the law: eſpecially when the condition is alſo given by God. Surely then here is all free; if the Father freely gave the Son, and the Son freely pay the debt; and if God freely accept that way of payment, when he might have required it of the principal; and if both Father and Son freely offer us the purchaſed life upon thoſe fair conditions; and if they alſo freely ſend the Spirit to enable us to perform thoſe conditions, then what is here, that is not free? Oh the everlaſting admiration that muſt needs furpriſe the ſaints to think of this freeneſs! What did the Lord ſee in me, that he ſhould judge me meet for ſuch a ſtate? That I who was but a poor, deſpiſed wretch, ſhould be clad in the brightneſs of this glory? That I, a ſilly creeping worm, ſhould be advanced to this high dignity! He that durſt not lift up his eyes to heaven, but ſtood afar off, ſmiting his breaſt, and crying, Lord, *be merciful to me a ſinner;* now to be lifted up to heaven himſelf! He who was wont to write his name in *Bradford's* ſtyle, *The unthankful, the hard-hearted, the unworthy ſinner!* and was wont to admire that patience; ſure he will admire at this alteration, when he ſhall find by experience, that unworthineſs

neſs could not hinder his ſalvation, which he thought would have bereaved him of every mercy. Ah Chriſtian, there is no talk of our worthineſs or unworthineſs. If worthineſs were our condition for admittance, we might ſit down with St. *John*, and weep, *Becauſe none in heaven or on earth is found worthy. But the Lion of the tribe of Judah is worthy, and hath prevailed; and by that title muſt we hold the inheritance.* We ſhall offer there the offering that *David* refuſed, *even praiſe for that which coſt us nothing.* Here our commiſſion runs, *Freely we have received, freely give.* But Chriſt hath dearly received, yet freely gives. Yet this is not all. If it were only for nothing, and without our merit, the wonder were great: but it is moreover againſt our merit, and againſt our long endeavouring our own ruin. The broken heart that hath known the deſert of ſin, doth both underſtand and feel what I ſay! What an aſtoniſhing thought it will be, to think of the unmeaſurable difference between our deſervings and our receivings! Between the ſtate we ſhould have been in, and the ſtate we are in! To look down upon *hell*, and ſee the vaſt difference that free grace hath made betwixt us and them? To ſee the inheritance there, which we were born to, ſo different from that which we are adopted to! Oh, what pangs of love will it cauſe within us, to think, yonder was the place that ſin would have brought me to: but this is it that Chriſt hath brought me to. Yonder death was the wages of my ſin: but this *eternal life is the gift of God, through Jeſus Chriſt my Lord.* Doubtleſs this will be our everlaſting admiration, that ſo rich a crown ſhould fit the head of ſo vile a ſinner! That ſuch high advancement, and ſuch long unfruitfulneſs and unkindneſs can be the ſtate of the ſame perſons! And that ſuch vile rebellions can conclude in ſuch moſt preciousjoys! But no thanks to us; nor to any of our duties and labours, much leſs to our neglects and lazineſs; we know to whom the praiſe is due, and muſt be

given for ever. And indeed to this very end it was, that infinite wiſdom did caſt the whole deſign of man's ſalvation into the mould of Purchaſe and Freeneſs, that the love and joy of man might be perfected, and the honour of grace moſt highly advanced; that the thought of merit might neither cloud the one, nor obſtruct the other; and that on theſe two hinges the gates of heaven might turn. So then let [Deſerved] be written on the door of hell, but on the door of heaven and life, [The free Gift.]

A third comfortable adjunct of this Reſt is, That it is the fellowſhip of the bleſſed ſaints and angels of God. Not ſo ſingular will the Chriſtian be, as to be ſolitary. Though it be proper to the Saints only, yet it is common to all the Saints. For what is it, but an aſſociation of bleſſed ſpirits in God? A corporation of perfected Saints, whereof Chriſt is the head? The communion of Saints compleated? For thoſe that have prayed, and faſted, and wept, and watched, and waited together; now to enjoy, and praiſe together, methinks ſhould much advance their pleaſure. He who mentioneth the qualifications of our happineſs, on purpoſe that our joy may be full, and maketh ſo oft mention of our conjuction in his praiſes, ſure doth hereby intimate to us, that this will be ſome advantage to our joys. Certain I am of this, fellow-chriſtians, that as we have been together in labour, duty, danger, and diſtreſs, ſo ſhall we be in the great recompenſe; and as we have been ſcorned and deſpiſed, ſo ſhall we be crowned and honoured together; and we who have gone through the day of ſadneſs, ſhall enjoy together that day of gladneſs. And thoſe who have been with us in perſecution and priſon, ſhall be with us alſo in that palace of conſolation. When I look in the faces of the people of God, and believingly think of this day, what a refreſhing thought is it! Shall we not there remember our fellowſhip in duty, and in ſufferings? How oft our groans made as it were one ſound, our tears but one ſtream, and our deſires

ſires but one prayer? And now all our praiſes ſhall make up one melody; and all our churches one church: and all ourſelves but one body: for we ſhall be one in Chriſt, even as he and the Father are one. It is true, we muſt be very careful that we look not for that in the Saints, which is alone in Chriſt, and that we give them not his prerogative; nor expect too great a part of our comfort in the fruition of them: we are prone enough to this kind of idolatry. But yet he who commands us ſo to love them now, will give us leave in the ſame ſubordination to himſelf, to love them then, when himſelf hath made them much more lovely. And if we may love them, we ſhall ſurely rejoice in them; for love cannot ſtand without an anſwerable joy. If the fore-thought of ſitting down with *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, *Jacob*, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, may be our lawful joy; then how much more that real ſight, and actual poſſeſſion? It cannot but be comfortable to me to think of that day, when I ſhall join with *Moſes* in his Song, with *David* in his Pſalms of Praiſe; and with all the redeemed in the *Song of the Lamb for ever*. When we ſhall ſee *Enoch* walking with God; *Noah* enjoying the end of his ſingularity; *Joſeph* of his integrity; *Job* of his patience; *Hezekiah* of his uprightneſs; and all the Saints the end of their faith. O happy day, when I ſhall depart out of this crowd and ſink, and go to that ſame council of ſouls! I know that *Chriſt* is All in All, and that it is the preſence of God that maketh heaven to be heaven. But yet it much ſweetneth the thoughts of that place to me, to remember that there are ſuch a multitude of my moſt dear and precious friends in Chriſt: *with whom I took ſweet counſel, and with whom I went up to the houſe of God, who walked with me in the fear of God, and integrity of their hearts*: in the face of whoſe converſations there was written the name of *Chriſt*, whoſe ſenſible mention of his excellencies hath made my heart to burn within me. To think that ſuch a friend that died at ſuch a time, and ſuch a

one at another time, and that all theſe are entered into Reſt; and we ſhall ſurely go to them.—— It is a queſtion with ſome, Whether we ſhall know each other in heaven or no? Surely, there ſhall no knowledge ceaſe, which now we have; but only that which implieth our imperfection. And what imperfection can this imply? Nay, our preſent knowledge ſhall be increaſed beyond belief: it ſhall indeed be done away, but as the light of ſtars is done away by the riſing of the ſun; which is more properly doing away of our *ignorance* than our knowledge; indeed we ſhall not know each other after the fleſh; but by the image of *Chriſt*, and ſpiritual relation, and former faithfulneſs in improving our talents: beyond doubt, we ſhall know and be known. Nor is it only our old acquaintance, but all the Saints of all ages, whoſe faces in the fleſh we never ſaw, whom we ſhall there both know, and comfortably enjoy. Yea, and Angels as well as Saints, will be our bleſſed acquaintance. Thoſe who now are willingly miniſterial ſpirits for our good, will willingly then be our companions in joy for the perfecting of our good: and they who had ſuch joy in heaven for our converſion, will gladly rejoice with us in our glorification. I think, Chriſtian, this will be a more honourable aſſembly, than ever you have beheld; and a more happy Society than you were ever of before. Then we ſhall truly ſay, as *David*, I *am a companion of all them that fear Thee; when we are come to Mount* Sion, *and to the City of the Living* God, *the Heavenly* Jeruſalem, *and to an innumerable Company of Angels: to the general aſſembly, and church of the firſt born, which are written in heaven, and to* God *the Judge of all, and to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, and to* Jeſus *the Mediator of the New Covenant.* So then I conclude, This is one ſingular excellency of the Reſt of heaven, *That we are fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the houſehold of* God.

4. Another

4. Another excellent property of our Reſt will be, that the joys of it are immediately from God. *We ſhall ſee* God *face to face*; and ſtand continually in his preſence; and conſequently derive our life and comfort immediately from him. Whether God will make uſe of any creatures for our ſervice then; or if any, of what creatures, and what uſe; is more than I yet know: but it is certain, that at leaſt, our greateſt joys will be immediate, if not all. Now we have nothing at all immediately, but at the ſecond or third hand, or how many who knows? From the earth, from man, from ſun and moon, from the influence of the planets, from the miniſtration of Angels, and from the Spirit of Chriſt; and doubtleſs, the farther the ſtream runs from the fountain, the more impure it is. It gathers ſome defilement from every unclean channel it paſſeth through. Though it ſavours not in the hand of Angels, of the imperfection of ſinners, yet it doth of the imperfection of creatures; and as it comes from man, it ſavours of both. How quick and piercing is the world in itſelf! Yet many times it never enters, being managed by a feeble arm. O what weight and worth is there in every paſſage of the bleſſed goſpel! Enough, one would think, to enter and force the dulleſt ſoul, and wholly poſſeſs its thoughts and affections: and yet how oft doth it drop as water upon a ſtone? The things of God which we handle, are divine: but our manner of handling is human: and there is little or none that ever we touch, but we leave the print of our fingers behind us; but if God ſhould ſpeak this word himſelf, it would be a piercing, melting word indeed.

If an angel from heaven ſhould preach the goſpel, yet could he not deliver it according to its glory; much leſs we, who never ſaw what they have ſeen, and keep this treaſure in earthen veſſels. The comforts that flow through ſermons, ſacraments, reading, conference, and creatures,

are but half comforts; in compariſon of thoſe which the Almighty ſhall ſpeak with his own mouth, and reach forth with his own hand. The Chriſtian knows by experience now, that his moſt immediate joys are his ſweeteſt joys; which have leaſt of man, and are moſt directly from the Spirit. That is one reaſon, I conceive, why Chriſtians who are much in ſecret prayer and meditation, are men of greateſt life: becauſe they are nearer the well-head, and have all more immediately from God himſelf. And that I conceive to be the reaſon, why we are more indiſpoſed to thoſe ſecret duties, and can eaſier bring our hearts to hear, and read, than to ſecret prayer, ſelf-examination, and meditation; becauſe in the former is more of man, and in theſe we approach the Lord alone, and our natures draw back from the moſt ſpiritual duties. Not that we ſhould therefore caſt off the other, and neglect any ordinance of God: to live above them while we uſe them, is the way of a Chriſtian. But to live above ordinances ſo as to live without them, is to live without the government of Chriſt. It is then we ſhall have light without a candle; and a perpetual day without the ſun: *for the city hath no need of the ſun, neither of the moon to ſhine in it; for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof*, Rev. xxi. 23. Nay, *There ſhall be no night there, and they need no candle, nor light of the ſun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they ſhall reign for ever and ever.* We ſhall then have reſt without ſleep, and be kept from cold without our cloathing, and need no fig leaves to hide our ſhame: for God will be our Reſt, and Chriſt our cloathing, and ſhame and ſin will ceaſe together. We ſhall then have health without phyſic, and ſtrength without the uſe of food; for the Lord God will be our ſtrength, and the light of his countenance will be health to our ſouls and marrow to our bones. We ſhall then (and not till then) have enlightened underſtandings

ſtandings without Scripture, and be governed without a written law. For the Lord will perfect his law in our hearts, and we ſhall be all perfectly taught of God; his own Will ſhall be our law, and his own face ſhall be our light for ever. We ſhall then have communion without ſacraments, when Chriſt ſhall drink with us of the fruit of the vine, that is, refreſh us with the comforting wine of immediate fruition, in the kingdom of his Father.

5. A further excellency of this Reſt is this; it will be a ſuitable Reſt: ſuited, 1. To our natures. 2. To our deſires. 3. To our neceſſities.

1. To our natures. If ſuitableneſs concur not with excellency, the beſt things may be bad to us: for it is not that which makes things good in themſelves, to be good to us. In our choice of friends, we oft paſs by the more excellent, to chuſe the more ſuitable. Every good agrees not with every nature. The choiceſt dainties which we feed upon ourſelves, would be to our beaſts, as an unpleaſing, ſo an inſufficient ſuſtenance.

Now here is ſuitableneſs and excellency conjoined. The new nature of the Saints doth ſuit their ſpirits to this Reſt: and indeed their holineſs is nothing elſe but a ſpark taken from this element, and by the Spirit of Chriſt kindled in their hearts, the flame whereof, as mindful of its divine original, doth ever mount aloft, and tend to the place from whence it comes. Gold and earthly glory, temporal crowns and kingdoms, could not make a Reſt for Saints. As they were not redeemed with ſo low a price, ſo neither are they endued with ſo low a nature. As God will have from them a ſpiritual worſhip, ſuitable to his own ſpiritual being; ſo will he provide them a ſpiritual Reſt, ſuitable to his people's ſpiritual nature.

A heaven of the knowledge of God, and his Chriſt; and a delightful complacency in that mutual love, and everlaſting rejoicing in the fruition of our God, a perpetual ſinging of his high

praiſes: this is a heaven for a Saint: a ſpiritual Reſt, ſuitable to a ſpiritual nature. Then we ſhall live in our element. We are now as the fiſh in ſome ſmall veſſel of water, that hath only ſo much as will keep him alive: but what is that to the full ocean? We have a little air let into us, to afford us breathing: but what is that to the ſweet and freſh gales upon mount *Sion?* We have a beam of the ſun to lighten our darkneſs, and a warm ray to keep us from freezing: but then we ſhall live in its light, and be revived by its heat for ever.

2. It is ſuitable to the deſires of the Saints: for ſuch as is their nature, ſuch are their deſires; and ſuch as their deſires, ſuch will be their Reſt. Indeed we have now a mixed nature: and from contrary principles, ariſe contrary deſires. But it is the deſires of our renewed nature which this Reſt is ſuited to. Whilſt our deſires remain corrupt and miſguided, it is a far greater mercy to deny, yea, to deſtroy them, than to ſatisfy them: but thoſe which are ſpiritual, are of his own planting, and he will ſurely water them, and give the increaſe. He quickened our hunger and thirſt for righteouſneſs, that he might make us happy in a full ſatisfaction.

Chriſtian, this is Reſt after thy own heart; it containeth all that thy heart can wiſh, that which thou longeſt for, prayeſt for, laboureſt for, there thou ſhalt find it all. Thou hadſt rather have God in Chriſt, than all the world; why there thou ſhalt have him. Deſire what thou canſt, and aſk what thou wilt, as a Chriſtian, and it ſhall be given thee; not only to half of the kingdom, but to the enjoyment of both kingdom and king. This is a life of both deſire and prayer; but that is a life of ſatisfaction and enjoyment.

3. This Reſt is ſuitable to the Saints' neceſſities alſo, as well as their natures and deſires. It contains whatſoever they truly wanted; not ſupplying them with groſs created comforts, which, like

like *Saul's* armour on *David*, are more burthen than benefit: but they ſhall there have the benefit without the burthen; and the pure ſpirits extracted (as it were) ſhall make up their cordial, without the mixture of any droſſy or earthy ſubſtance. It was Chriſt, and perfect holineſs, which they moſt needed, and with theſe ſhall they be ſupplied.

4. Another excellency of our Reſt will be this, that it will be abſolutely perfect and compleat; and this both in the ſincerity and univerſality of it. We ſhall then have joy without ſorrow, and reſt without wearineſs: as there is no mixture of our corruption with our graces, ſo no mixture of ſufferings with our ſolace: there is none of thoſe waves in that harbour, which now toſs us up and down. To-day we are well, to-morrow ſick; to-day in eſteem, to-morrow in diſgrace; to-day we have friends, to-morrow none: nay, we have wine and vinegar in the ſame cup. If revelations ſhould raiſe us up to the third heaven, the meſſenger of *Satan* muſt preſently buffet us: but there is none of this inconſtancy in heaven. If perfect love caſts out fear; then perfect joy muſt needs caſt out ſorrow, and perfect happineſs exclude all the relicks of miſery. There will be an univerſal removal of all our evils. And though the poſitive part be the ſweeteſt, and that which draws the other after it, even as the riſing of the ſun excludes the darkneſs; yet is not the negative part to be ſlighted, even our freedom from ſo many and great calamities. Let us therefore look over theſe things more punctually, and ſee what it is that we ſhall here reſt from. In general, it is from all evil. Particularly, *Firſt*, from ſin. *Secondly*, ſuffering.

Firſt, It excludeth nothing more directly than ſin; whether original, and of nature; or actual, and of converſation: for *there entereth nothing that defileth*, or *worketh abomination, nor that maketh a lye*. What need Chriſt have died, if heaven could have contained imperfect ſouls? *For to this end*

came he into the world, that he might put away the works of the Devil. His blood and Spirit have not done all this, to leave us after all, defiled. *For what communion hath light with darkneſs? And what fellowſhip hath* Chriſt *with* Belial? He that hath prepared for ſin the torments of hell, will never admit it into the bleſſedneſs of heaven. Therefore Chriſtian, never fear this: if thou be once in heaven, thou ſhalt ſin no more. Is not this glad news to thee, who haſt prayed, and watched, and laboured againſt it ſo long? I know if it were offered to thy choice, thou wouldſt rather chuſe to be freed from ſin, than to be made heir of the world. Thou ſhalt have thy deſire: that hard heart, thoſe vile thoughts, which thou couldſt no more leave behind thee, than leave thyſelf behind thee, ſhall be now left behind for ever. If they accompany thee to death, they cannot proceed a ſtep further. Thy underſtanding ſhall never more be troubled with darkneſs: ignorance and error are inconſiſtent with this light. Now thou walkeſt like a man in the twilight, ever afraid of being out of the way; but then will all darkneſs be diſpelled, and our blind underſtandings fully opened.

O what would we give to know clearly all the profound myſteries in the doctrine of redemption, of juſtification, of the nature of grace, of the divine attributes! What would we give to ſee all dark Scriptures made plain, to ſee all ſeeming contradictions reconciled! When glory hath taken away the veil from our eyes, all this will be known in a moment; we ſhall then ſee clearly into all the controverſies about doctrine or diſcipline that now perplex us. The pooreſt Chriſtian is preſently there a more perfect divine, then any is here. We are now through our ignorance ſubject to ſuch mutability, that in points not fundamental, we change as the moon; but when once our ignorance is perfectly healed, then ſhall we be ſettled, reſolved men; then ſhall our reproach be taken from us, and we ſhall never change our judgment

judgment more. Our ignorance now doth lead us into error, to the grief of our more knowing brethren, to the diſturbing the church's quiet, to the ſcandalizing of others, and weakening ourſelves. How many a faithful ſoul is ſeduced into error! Loth they are to err, God knows; and therefore read and pray, and yet err ſtill. And in leſſer and more difficult points, how can it be otherwiſe?

Can it be expected, that men void of learning and ſtrength of parts, unſtudied and untaught, ſhould at the firſt onſet know thoſe truths, which they are almoſt incapable of knowing at all? When the greateſt divines of cleareſt judgment acknowledge ſo much difficulty, that they could almoſt find in their hearts, ſome times to profeſs them quite beyond their reach? But O that happy approaching day, when error ſhall vaniſh away for ever, when our underſtanding ſhall be filled with God himſelf, whoſe light will leave no darkneſs in us! His face ſhall be the Scripture, where we ſhall read the truth: and himſelf inſtead of teachers and counſellors, to perfect our underſtandings, and acquaint us with himſelf. No more error, no more ſcandal to others, no more diſquiet to our own ſpirit, no more miſtaken zeal, for falſehood. Many a good man hath here in his miſtaken zeal, been a means to deceive and pervert his brethren; and when he ſees his own error, cannot again tell how to undeceive them: but there we ſhall all conſpire in one truth, as being one in Him who is the truth.

And as we ſhall reſt from all the ſin of our underſtandings, ſo of our wills, affection, and converſation. We ſhall no more retain this rebelling principle, which is ſtill withdrawing us from God. We ſhall no more be oppreſſed with the power of our corruptions, nor vexed with their preſence: no pride, paſſion, ſlothfulneſs, ſenſeleſſneſs ſhall enter with us; no ſtrangeneſs to God, and the things of God; no coldneſs of affections, nor im-

perfection in our love; no uneven walking, nor grieving of the ſpirit; no ſcandalous action, or unholy converſation: we ſhall reſt from all theſe for ever. Then ſhall our underſtandings receive their light from the face of God, as the full moon from the open ſun: then ſhall our wills correſpond to the divine will, *as face anſwers face in a glaſs*; and his will ſhall be our law and rule, from which we ſhall never ſwerve again. I conclude therefore with the words next my text, *He that is entered into his Reſt, hath ceaſed from his own works, as God from his.* So that there is a perfect Reſt from ſin.

Secondly, It is a perfect Reſt from ſuffering. When the cauſe is gone, the effect ceaſeth. Our ſufferings were but the conſequents of our ſinning, and here they both ceaſe together.

We ſhall reſt from all the temptations of *Satan*. What a grief is it to a Chriſtian, though he yield not to the temptation, yet to be ſtill ſolicited to deny his Lord? That ſuch a thought ſhould be caſt into his heart? That he can ſet about nothing that is good, but *Satan* is ſtill diſſuading him from it, diſtracting him in it, or diſcouraging him after it? What a torment, as well as a temptation is it, to have ſuch horrid motions made to his ſoul? Sometimes cruel thoughts of God; ſometimes undervaluing thoughts of Chriſt; ſometimes unbelieving thoughts of Scripture; ſometimes injurious thoughts of Providence: to be tempted ſometimes to turn to preſent things; ſometimes to play with the baits of ſin; ſometimes to venture on the delights of the fleſh; and ſometimes to *Atheiſm* itſelf? Eſpecially, when we know the treachery of our own hearts, that they are as tinder, ready to take fire, as ſoon as one of theſe ſparks ſhall fall upon them; but when the day of our deliverance comes, we ſhall fully reſt from theſe temptations: Satan is then bound up, the time of tempting is done; the time of torment to himſelf, and his conquered captives, is then come

come; and the victorious ſaints ſhall have triumph from temptation. Now we walk among his ſnares, and are in danger of being circumvented with his wiles; but then we are quite above his ſnares. He hath power here to tempt us in the wilderneſs, but he entereth not the Holy City: he may ſet us on the pinnacle of the temple in the earthly *Jeruſalem*, but the new *Jeruſalem* he may not approach. Perhaps he may bring us to an exceeding high mountain; but the mount *Sion*, and City of the living God, he cannot aſcend. Or if he ſhould, yet all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, will be but a poor bait to the ſoul which is poſſeſſed of the kingdom of our Lord.

2. We ſhall reſt from all our temptations which we now undergo from the world and the fleſh, as well as Satan: and that is a number inexpreſſible. O the hourly dangers that we here walk in! Every ſenſe is a ſnare; every member a ſnare; every creature a ſnare; every mercy a ſnare; and every duty a ſnare to us. We can ſcarce open our eyes, but we are in danger: if we behold them above us, we are in danger of envy: if we ſee ſumptuous buildings, pleaſant habitations, honour and riches, we are in danger to be drawn away with covetous deſires: if the rags and beggary of others, we are in danger of ſelf applauding thoughts or unmercifulneſs; if we ſee beauty, it is a bait to us; if deformity, to loathing and diſdain. We can ſcarcely hear a word ſpoken, but contains to us matter of temptation. How ſoon do ſlanderous reports, vain jeſts, or wanton ſpeeches creep into the heart? How ſtrong and prevalent a temptation is our appetite? And how conſtant and ſtrong a watch doth it require? Have we comlineſs and beauty? What fuel for pride! Are we deformed? What an occaſion of repining! Have we ſtrength of reaſon, and learning? O how hard is it not to be puffed up! To hunt after applauſe? To deſpiſe our brethren? Are we unlearned, of ſhallow heads and ſlender parts? How apt

apt then to deſpiſe what we have not! And to undervalue that which we do not know! And to err with confidence, becauſe of our ignorance! And if conceitedneſs and pride do but ſtrike in, to become a zealous enemy to truth, and a leading troubler of the church's peace, under pretences of truth? Are we men of eminence and authority? How ſtrong is our temptation to ſlight our brethren! To abuſe our truſt! To ſeek ourſelves! To ſtand upon our honour and privileges! To forget ourſelves, our poor brethren, and public good! How hard to devote our power to his glory, from whom we have received it! How prone to make our wills our law! Are we inferiors? How prone to grudge at others preeminence! And to bring their actions to the bar of our judgment! Are we rich, and not too much exalted? Are we poor and not diſcontented? Do we ſet upon duty? They are ſnares too: either we are ſtupid and lazy, or reſt on them and turn from Chriſt. In a word, not one word that falls from the mouth of a Miniſter and Chriſtian, but it is a ſnare; not a place we come into, not a word that our tongues ſpeak, not any mercy we poſſeſs, not a bit we put into our mouths, but they are ſnares: not that God hath made them ſo, but through our own corruption they become ſo to us. So that what a ſad caſe are we in: eſpecially they that diſcern them not; for it is almoſt impoſſible they ſhould eſcape them! It was not for nothing that our Lord cries out, *What I ſay to one, I ſay to all, Watch.* We are like the lepers at *Samaria, if we go into the city, there is nothing but famine; if we ſit ſtill, we periſh.*

But for ever bleſſed be omnipotent love, which ſaves us out of all theſe, and makes our ſtraits but the advantages of the glory of his grace! And *bleſſed be the Lord, who hath not given our ſouls for a prey, our ſoul is eſcaped as a bird out of the ſnare of the fowler; the ſnare is broken, and we are eſcaped.* Now, our houſes, our clothes, our ſleep, our food,

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our phyſic, our father, mother, wife, children, friends, goods, lands, are all ſo many temptations; and ourſelves the greateſt ſnare to ourſelves: but in heaven, the danger and trouble is over; there is nothing but what will advance our joy. Now every companion is beckoning us to ſin, and we can ſcarce tell how to ſay them nay: but our reſt will free us from all theſe. As *Satan* hath no entrance there, ſo neither any thing to ſerve his malice; but all things there with us conſpire the praiſes of our great deliverer.

3 And as we reſt from the temptations; ſo alſo from all abuſes and perſecutions which we ſuffer at the hands of wicked men. We ſhall be ſcorned, derided, impriſoned, baniſhed by them no more; the prayers of the ſouls under the altar will then be anſwered, and God *will avenge their blood on theſe that dwell on the earth.* This is the time for crowning with thorns, buffeting, ſpitting on: that is the time for crowning with glory. Now the law is decreed on, *That whoſoever will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, ſhall ſuffer perſecutions*: then *they that ſuffered with him, ſhall be glorified with him.* Now we muſt be *hated of all men for Chriſt's name ſake*: then *will* Chriſt *be admired in his Saints* that were thus hated. We are here as the ſcorn and off-ſcouring of all things; as men ſet up for a gazing-ſtock to angels and men, even for ſigns and wonders amongſt profeſſing Chriſtians; they put us out of their ſynagogues, and caſt out our name as evil, and ſeparate us from their company: but we ſhall then be as much gazed at for our glory, and they will be ſhut out of the church of the ſaints, and ſeparated from us, whether they will or no. They now *think it ſtrange that we run not with them to all exceſs of riot*: they will then think it more ſtrange that they ran not with us in the deſpiſed ways of God. We can ſcarce now pray in our families, or ſing praiſes to God; but our voice is a vexation to them: how muſt it torment them then, to ſee us praiſing and rejoicing, while they are howling and lamenting!

Brethren

Brethren, you that now can attempt no work of God without reſiſtance, and find you muſt either loſe the love of the world, and your outward comforts, or elſe the love of God, and your eternal ſalvation: conſider, you ſhall in heaven have no diſcouraging company, nor any but who will further your work, and gladly join heart and voice with you in your everlaſting joy and praiſes. Till then *Poſſeſs your ſouls in patience:* bind all reproaches as a crown to your heads; eſteem them greater riches than the world's treaſure: *Account it matter of joy, when ye fall into tribulation.* You have ſeen that our God is able to deliver us; but this is nothing to our final deliverance: *He will recompenſe tribulation to them that trouble you: and to you that are troubled Reſt with* Chriſt.

4. We ſhall then alſo reſt from all our ſad diviſions, and unchriſtian quarrels with one another. As he ſaid, who ſaw the carcaſes lie together, as if they had embraced each other, who had been ſlain by each other in a duel; "How lovingly do they embrace one another, who periſhed through their mutual enmity!" So, how lovingly do thouſands live together in heaven, who lived in diviſions on earth! As he ſaid, who beheld how quietly and peaceably the bones and duſt of mortal enemies did lie together; "You did not live together ſo peaceably." So we may ſay of multitudes in heaven, now all are of one mind, one heart, and one employment. You lived not on earth in ſo ſweet familiarity. There is no contention, becauſe none of this pride, ignorance, or other corruption: *Paul* and *Barnabas* are now fully reconciled. There they are, not every man conceited of his own underſtanding, and in love with the iſſue of his own brain; but all admiring the divine perfection, and in love with God and one another. As old *Gryneus* wrote to his friend, "If I ſee you no more on earth, yet we ſhall there meet, where *Luther* and *Zuinglius* are now well agreed." There is no recording our brethren's infirmities: nor raking into the ſores which

which Chriſt died to heal. There is no plotting to ſtrengthen our party: nor deep deſigning againſt our brethren.

And is it not a ſhame and pity, that our courſe is now ſo contrary? Surely, if there be ſorrow or ſhame in heaven, we ſhall then be both ſorry and aſhamed to look one another in the face; to remember all this carriage on earth, even as the brethren of *Joſeph* were to behold him, when they remembered their former unkind uſage. Is it not enough that all the world is againſt us, but we muſt alſo be againſt ourſelves? Did I ever think to have heard Chriſtians ſo to reproach and ſcorn Chriſtians? and men profeſſing the fear of God, to make ſo little conſcience of cenſuring, viliſying, and diſgracing one another? O what helliſh things are ignorance and pride, that can bring mens' ſouls to ſuch a caſe as this! *Paul* knew what he ſaid, when he commanded, that *a novice ſhould not be a teacher: leſt being lifted up, he fall into the condemnation of the devil*, 1 Tim. iii. 6. He diſcerned that ſuch young Chriſtians that have got but a little ſmattering knowledge in religion, lie in greateſt danger of this pride and condemnation. Who but *Paul* could have foreſeen that among the very teachers and governors of ſo choice a church as *Epheſus*, there were ſome that afterwards ſhould be notorious ſect-makers? *That of their ownſelves men ſhould ariſe, ſpeaking perverſe things, to draw away diſciples after them*, Acts xx. 30. Who then can expect better from any Society now, how knowing and holy ſoever? To-day they may be unanimous, and joined in love; and perhaps within a few weeks be divided, and at bittter enmity, through their doting on queſtions that tend not to edify.

5. We ſhall then reſt from all which we now undergo by participating with our brethren in their calamities. Alas, if we had nothing upon ourſelves to trouble us, yet what heart could lay aſide ſorrows, that lives in the ſound of the church's ſufferings? If *Job* had nothing upon his

his body to diſquiet him, yet the meſſage of his children's overthrow, muſt needs grieve the moſt patient ſoul. Except we are turned into ſteel or ſtone, and have loſt both Chriſtian and human affection, there needs no more than the miſeries of our brethren to fill our hearts with ſorrows. The church on earth is a mere hoſpital, which way ſoever we go, we hear complaining; and into what corner ſoever we caſt our eyes, we behold objects of pity: ſome groaning under a dark underſtanding, ſome under a ſenſeleſs heart, ſome languiſhing under unfruitful weakneſs, and ſome bleeding for miſcarriages and wilfulneſs, and ſome in a lethargy, that they are paſt complaining; ſome crying out of their pining poverty; ſome groaning under pains and infirmities; ſome bewailing a whole catalogue of calamities, eſpecially in days of common ſufferings: but our day of Reſt will free us and them from all this. Now we may enter many a poor Chriſtian's cottage, and ſee poverty poſſeſſing and filling all: how much better is that day, when we ſhall ſee them filled with Chriſt, clothed with glory, and equal with the greateſt princes?

But a far greater grief it is to our ſpirits, to ſee ſuch an one, with whom we took ſweet counſel, now fallen off to ſenſuality, turned drunkard, worldling, or a perſecutor, and theſe trying times have given us too large occaſion for ſuch ſorrows: to ſee our deareſt friends turned aſide from the truth of Chriſt, and confident in the fleſh, continue their neglect of Chriſt and their ſouls, and nothing waking them out of their ſecurity; and to think how certainly they ſhall be in hell for ever, if they die in their preſent ſtate: and will it not be a bleſſed day, when we ſhall reſt from all theſe ſorrows? *When the people ſhall be all righteous, even the work of God's hands, the branch of his planting, that he may be glorified?* Thus ſhall we reſt from our participation of our brethren's ſufferings.

6. We

6. We ſhall reſt from all our perſonal ſufferings. And though this may ſeem a ſmall thing to thoſe that live in continual eaſe, and abound in all kind of proſperity; yet methinks, to the daily afflicted ſoul, it ſhould make the fore-thoughts of heaven delightful: and I think I ſhall meet with few of the ſaints, but will ſay, that this is their own caſe.

Though we are reconciled by the blood of the covenant, and the price is paid for our full deliverance; yet our Redeemer ſees fit to leave this meaſure of miſery upon us, to remind us of what we would elſe forget; to be ſerviceable to his wiſe and gracious deſigns, and advantageous to our full and final recovery. As all our ſenſes are the inlets of ſin; ſo they are the inlets of ſorrow. Grief creeps in at our eyes, at our ears, and almoſt every where: it ſeizeth upon our head, our heart, our fleſh, our ſpirits; and what part doth eſcape it? Fears devours us, and darken our delights, as the froſt nips the bud: cares feed upon our ſpirits, as the ſcorching ſun doth wither the delicate flowers. Or, if any have fortified his inwards againſt theſe, yet he is naked ſtill without.

What tender pieces are theſe duſty bodies? What brittle glaſſes do we bear about us? And how many thouſand dangers are they hurried through? And how hardly cured, if once cracked? O the multitude of ſlender veins, of tender membranes, nerves, fibres, muſcles, arteries: and all ſubject to obſtructions, tenſions, contractions, reſolutions, ruptures, or one thing or other to cauſe their grief! Every one is a fit object for pain, and fit to communicate that pain to the whole: but ſin, and fleſh, and duſt, and pain, will all be left behind together.

O the bleſſed tranquility of that region, where there is nothing but ſweet continued peace! No ſucceſſion of joy there, becauſe no intermiſſion. Our lives will be but one joy, as one time will be changed into eternity. O healthful place, where none

none are ſick! O fortunate land, where all are kings! O place moſt holy where all are prieſts! How free a ſtate, where none are ſervants, ſave to their ſupreme monarch! Our face ſhall no more be pale or ſad; our groans and ſighs will be done away, and God *ſhall wipe away all tears from our eyes.* No more parting of friends, nor voice of lamentation heard in our dwellings: no more breaches, nor diſproportion in our friendſhip, nor any trouble accompanying our relations: no more care of maſters for ſervants, or parents for children, or magiſtrates over ſubjects, or miniſters over people. O what room can there be for any evil, where the people is perfectly filled with God? *Then ſhall the ranſomed of the Lord return and come to Sion with ſongs, and everlaſting joy upon their heads. They ſhall obtain joy and gladneſs, and ſorrow and ſighing ſhall flee away,* Iſaiah xxxv. 10. Hold out then a little longer, O my ſoul; bear with the infirmities of thine earthly tabernacle; endure that ſhare of ſorrows, that the love of the father ſhall impoſe; ſubmit to his indignation alſo, becauſe thou haſt ſinned againſt him; it will be thus but a little while; the ſound of thy Redeemer's feet are even at the door; and thine own deliverance nearer than many others. And thou, who haſt often cried in the language of the divine Poet,

"Sorrow was all my ſoul; I ſcarce believed,
Till grief did tell me roundly, that I lived."

ſhalt then feel, that God and joy is all thy ſoul! the fruition of whom, with thy freedom from all theſe ſorrows, will more ſweetly, and more feelingly make thee know, and to his eternal praiſe acknowledge, that thou liveſt. And thus we ſhall reſt from all afflictions.

The laſt bleſſed attribute of this Reſt is, That it is an *Eternal Reſt.* This is the crown of our crown; without which all were comparatively nothing. The very thought of leaving it, would embitter all our joys; and the more, becauſe of the

the ſingular excellencies we muſt forſake. It would be a hell in heaven, to think of once loſing heaven: as it would be a kind of heaven to the damned, had they but hopes of once eſcaping.

It makes our preſent life of little value (were it not for the reference it hath to eternity) to think that we muſt ſhortly lay it down. How can we take delight in any thing, when we remember how ſhort that delight will be? But, O bleſſed eternity! where our lives are perplexed with no ſuch thoughts, nor our joys interrupted with any ſuch fears! O what do I ſay when I talk of eternity! Can my ſhallow thoughts conceive it? To be eternally bleſſed, and ſo bleſſed! Surely this, if any thing, is the reſemblance of God: eternity is a piece of infiniteneſs. Then, *O Death, where is thy ſting? O Grave where is thy victory?* Days, and nights, and years, time, and end, and death, are words which there have no ſignification; nor are uſed, except perhaps to extol eternity; as the mention of hell, to extol heaven: all the years of our Lord, and the years of our life, are ſwallowed up and loſt in this eternity.

While we were ſervants, we held by leaſe; and that but for the term of tranſitory life: *But the Son abideth in the houſe for ever.* Our earthly paradiſe in *Eden* had a way out, but none that ever we could find, in again: but this eternal paradiſe hath a way in, (a milky way to us, but a bloody way to Chriſt) but no way out again: *For they that would paſs from hence to you* (ſaith *Abraham*) *cannot*: a ſtrange phraſe! Would any paſs from ſuch a place, if they might? Could they endure to be abſent from God again one hour? No: but upon ſuppoſal they would, yet they could not. O then my ſoul, let go thy dreams of preſent pleaſure; and looſe thy hold of earth and fleſh. Fear not to enter thy eſtate, where thou ſhalt ever after ceaſe from thy fears. Sit down and ſadly once a day bethink thyſelf of this eternity: among all the

the arithmetical numbers, ſtudy the value of this infinite cypher, which, though it ſtand for nothing in the vulgar account, doth yet contain all our millions, as much leſs than a ſimple unit. Lay by the perplexed and contradicting chronological tables, and fix thine eye on this eternity; and the remote lines which thou couldſt not follow, thou ſhalt ſee all together here concentred. Study leſs theſe tedious volumes of hiſtory, which contain but the ſilent narration of dreams, and are but the pictures of the actions of ſhadows: and inſtead of all, ſtudy frequently, ſtudy thoroughly this one word [*Eternity*,] and when thou haſt thoroughly learned that one word, thou wilt never look on books again. What! live and never die! rejoice, and ever rejoice! O what ſweet words are theſe! This word [*Everlaſting*] contains the accompliſhed perfection of our glory. O that the wicked ſinner would but ſoundly ſtudy this word [*Everlaſting*:] methinks it ſhould ſtartle him out of his deep ſleep! O that the gracious ſoul would believingly ſtudy this word [*Everlaſting*] methinks it ſhould revive him in the deepeſt agony! And muſt I, Lord, thus live for ever? Then will I alſo love for ever. Muſt my joys be immortal? And ſhall not my thanks be alſo immortal? Surely, if I ſhall never loſe my glory, I will never alſo ceaſe thy praiſes. If thou wilt both perfect and perpetuate me, and my glory; as I ſhall be thine, and not mine own, ſo ſhall my glory, be thy glory; and as they did take their ſpring from thee, ſo all ſhall devolve to thee again; and as thy glory was thine ultimate end in my glory, ſo ſhall it alſo be mine end, when thou haſt crowned me with that glory which hath no end. And to *thee O King eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, ſhall be the honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

The People of God deſcribed.

HAVING thus performed my firſt taſk of deſcribing the Saints' Reſt; it remains that now I proceed to the ſecond, and ſhew you what theſe people of God are, and why ſo called; for whom this bleſſed Reſt remaineth.

Regeneration is the firſt and great qualification of the people of God. To be the people of God without regeneration, is as impoſſible as to be the children of men without generation; ſeeing we are born God's enemies, we muſt be new-born his ſons, or elſe remain his enemies ſtill.

Chriſt hath ſpoken it with his mouth, *That except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* The greateſt reformation of life, without this new life wrought in the ſoul, may procure our further deluſion, but never our ſalvation.

But by what acts doth this new life diſcover itſelf?

The firſt work I call Conviction, which comprehends the knowledge of what the Scripture ſpeaks againſt ſin and ſinners; and that this ſcripture which ſpeaks ſo, is the word of God himſelf. It comprehends alſo, ſome knowledge of ourſelves, and our own guilt, and an acknowledgment of the verity of thoſe conſequences, which from the promiſes of ſin in us, and threats in ſcripture, conclude us miſerable.

2. As there muſt be Conviction, ſo alſo Senſibility. God works on the heart, as well as the head: both were corrupted and out of order. The principle of new life doth quicken both. All true ſpiritual knowledge doth paſs into affections. The great things of ſin, of grace, and Chriſt, and eternity, which are of weight, one would think

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to move a rock; yet ſhake not the heart of the carnal profeſſor, nor pierce his ſoul to the quick: though he ſhould be a conſtant preacher of them to others, yet they little affect himſelf: when he is preſſing them upon the hearts of others, you would little think how inſenſible is his own ſoul: his invention procureth him zealous and moving expreſſions, but they cannot procure him anſwerable affections.

The things that the ſoul is thus convinced and ſenſible of, are eſpecially theſe:

1. The Evil of Sin. The ſinner is made to know and feel, that the ſin which was his delight, is a more loathſome thing than toads or ſerpents, and a greater evil than plague or famine, or any other calamities: it being a breach of the righteous law of the moſt high God, diſhonourable to Him, and deſtructive to the ſinner.

Now the ſinner reads and hears the reproofs of ſin, as words of courſe; but when you mention his ſin, he feels you ſpeak at his very heart, and yet is contented you ſhould ſhew him the worſt: he was wont to marvel, what made men keep ſuch a ſtir againſt ſin, what harm it was for a man to take a little pleaſure: he ſaw no ſuch heinouſneſs in it. But now the caſe is altered; God hath opened his eyes, to ſee its inexpreſſible vileneſs.

2. The Soul in this great work is convinced and ſenſible, as of the evil of ſin, ſo of its own miſery by reaſon of ſin. They who before read the threats of God's Law, as men do the ſtories of foreign wars; now find it is their own ſtory, and perceive they read their own doom, as if they found their names written in the curſe, or heard the Law ſay as, *Nathan*, *Thou art the man*. The wrath of God ſeemed to him, but as a ſtorm to a man in a dry houſe: but now, he finds the diſeaſe is his own, and feels the pains in his own bowels. In a word, he finds himſelf a condemned man

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dead and damned in point of law, and that nothing was wanting but mere execution to make him abſolutely and irrecoverably miſerable.

Whether you will call this a work of the Law or Goſpel, it is a work of the Spirit wrought in ſome meaſure in all the regenerate: and tho' ſome judge it unneceſſary bondage, yet it is beyond my conceiving, how he ſhould come to Chriſt for pardon, that firſt found not himſelf guilty and condemned: *The whole need not the phyſician, but they that are ſick.* Yet I deny not, but the diſcovery of the remedy as ſoon as the miſery, may prevent a great part of the trouble, and the diſtinct effect on the ſoul, to be with much more difficulty diſcerned: nay, the actings of the ſoul are ſo quick, and oft ſo confuſed, that the diſtinct order of theſe workings may not be apprehended or remembered at all: and perhaps the joyful apprehenſions of mercy may make the ſenſe of miſery the ſooner forgotten.

3. So doth the Spirit alſo convince the ſoul, of the creature's vanity and inſufficiency. Every man naturally is a flat idolater, our hearts were turned from God in our firſt fall; and ever ſince, the creature hath been our god: this is the grand ſin of nature: when we ſet up to ourſelves a wrong end, we muſt needs err in all the means. The creature is to every unregenerate man his god: he aſcribeth to it the divine prerogatives, and alloweth it the higheſt room in his ſoul, or if ever he come to be convinced of miſery, he fleeth to it as his ſaviour. Indeed God and his Chriſt have uſually the name; but the real expectation is from the creature, and the work of God is laid upon it. His pleaſure, his profit, and his honour, is the natural man's Trinity; and his Self, that is theſe in Unity: indeed, it is that fleſh that is the principal idol; the other three are deified in their relation to ourſelves. It was our firſt ſin, to aſpire to be as gods; and it is the greateſt ſin

that runs in our blood, and is propagated in our nature from generation to generation.

When God ſhould guide us, we guide ourſelves; when he ſhould be our ſovereign, we rule ourſelves. The laws which he gives us, we find fault with; if we had had the making of them, we would have made them otherwiſe: when he ſhould take care of us, (and muſt, or we periſh) we will care for ourſelves; when we ſhould depend on him daily, we had rather keep our ſtock ourſelves, and have our portion in our own hands; when we ſhould ſtand at his diſpoſal, we ſhould be at our own; and when we ſhould ſubmit to his providence, we uſually quarrel at it; as if we knew better what is good for us than he, or how to diſpoſe all things more wiſely. This is the language of a carnal heart, though it doth not always ſpeak out. When we ſhould ſtudy God, we ſtudy ourſelves; when we ſhould mind God, we mind ourſelves; when we ſhould love God, we love ourſelves; when we ſhould truſt God, we truſt ourſelves; when we ſhould honour God, we honour ourſelves, when we ſhould aſcribe to God, and admire him, we aſcribe to, and admire ourſelves; and inſtead of God, we would have all men's eyes and dependence on us, and all men's thanks returned to us, and would gladly be the only men on earth, extolled and admired by all.

And thus we are naturally our own idols: but down falls this *Dagon*, when God does once renew the ſoul. It is the great buſineſs of that great work to bring the heart back to God. He convinceth the ſinner, 1. That the creatures can neither be his god to make him; 2. Nor yet his Chriſt, to recover him from his miſery, to reſtore him to God, who is his happineſs. This God doth, not only by preaching, but by providence alſo: becauſe words will hardly take off the raging ſenſes, therefore doth God make his rod to ſpeak,

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and continue ſpeaking, till the ſinner hear, and hath learned this great leſſon.

This is the great reaſon why affliction doth ſo ordinarily concur in the work of converſion. Theſe real arguments which ſpeak to the quick, will force a hearing when the moſt powerful words are ſlighted. When a ſinner made his credit his God, and God ſhall caſt him into the loweſt diſgrace: or bring him that idolized his riches, into a condition wherein they cannot help him, or cauſe them to take wings and fly away; what a help is here to this work of conviction! When a man that made his pleaſure his god, whether eaſe, or ſports, or mirth, or company, or gluttony, or drunkenneſs, or cloathing, or buildings: or whatſoever a ranging eye, a curious ear, a raging appetite, or a luſtful heart could deſire, and God ſhall take theſe from him, or give him their ſting and curſe with them, and turn them into gall and wormwood, what a help is here to Conviction! When God ſhall caſt a man into a languiſhing ſickneſs, and inflict wounds and anguiſh on his heart, and ſtir up againſt him his own conſcience, and then, as it were, take him by the hand, and lead him to credit, to riches, to pleaſure, to company, to ſports, or whatſoever was deareſt to him, and ſay, Now try if theſe can help you: can theſe heal thy wounded conſcience? Can they now ſupport thy tottering cottage? Can they keep thy departing ſoul in thy body? or ſave thee from mine everlaſting wrath? Will they prove to thee eternal pleaſures? or redeem thy ſoul from the eternal flames? Cry aloud to them, and ſee not whether theſe will be inſtead of God and his Chriſt unto thee? O how this works with the ſinner! When ſenſe itſelf acknowledgeth the truth, and even the fleſh is convinced of the creature's vanity.

4. The fourth thing that the ſoul is convinced and ſenſible of, is the abſolute neceſſity, the full

ſufficiency, and perfect excellency of Jeſus Chriſt.

This conviction is not by mere argumentation, as a man is convinced of ſome unconcerning conſequence by diſpute: but alſo by the ſenſe of our deſperate miſery, as a man in a famine, by the neceſſity of food; or a man that has read, or heard his condemnation, is convinced of the abſolute neceſſity of a pardon. Now the ſinner finds himſelf in another caſe than ever he was aware of: he feels an inſupportable burden upon him, and ſees there is none but Chriſt can take it off: he perceives that he is under the wrath of God, and that the law proclaims him a rebel and an out-law, and none but Chriſt can make his peace: he is as a man purſued by a lion, that muſt periſh, if he find not preſent ſanctuary: he feels the curſe doth lie upon him, and upon all he hath for his ſake, and Chriſt alone can make him bleſſed: he is now brought to this dilemma, either he muſt have Chriſt to juſtify him, or burn in hell for ever: he muſt have Chriſt to bring him again to God, or be ſhut out of his preſence everlaſtingly. And no wonder; if he cry, as the martyr *Lambert*, *None but Chriſt; none but Chriſt.* It is not gold, but bread, that will ſatisfy the hungry; nor any thing but pardon, that will comfort the condemned. *All things are now but droſs and dung:* and *what we counted gain, is now but loſs in compariſon of Chriſt:* for as the ſinner ſeeth his utter miſery, and the diſability of himſelf, and all things to relieve him; ſo he doth perceive, that there is no ſaving mercy out of Chriſt. There is none found in heaven or earth that can open the ſealed Book ſave the Lamb; without his blood there is no remiſſion, and without remiſſion there is no ſalvation. Could the ſinner now make any ſhift without Chriſt, or could any thing elſe ſupply his wants, and ſave his ſoul, then might Chriſt be diſregarded: but now he is convinced, that there is no other name, and the neceſſity is abſolute.

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2. And as the soul is thus convinced of the necessity of Christ, so also of his full sufficiency: he sees, though the creature cannot, and himself cannot, yet Christ can. Though the fig-leaves of our own unrighteous Righteousness are too short to cover our nakedness, yet the Righteousness of Christ is large enough: ours is disproportionable to the justice of the law, but Christ's doth extend to every tittle: his sufferings being a perfect satisfaction to the law, and *all power in heaven and earth being given to him,* He is now able to supply every one of our wants, and *to save to the uttermost all that come to Him.*

3. The Soul is also here convinced of the perfect excellency of Jesus Christ, both as he is considered in himself, and as considered in relation to us; both as he is the only way to the Father, and as he is the end, being one with the Father. Before, he knew Christ's excellency, as a blind man knows the light of the sun; but now, as one that beholdeth his glory.

And thus doth the Spirit convince the Soul.

4. After this sensible conviction, the will discovereth also its change; and that in regard of all the fore-mentioned objects.

1. The sin which the understanding pronounceth evil, the will doth turn from, with abhorrence. Not that the sensitive appetite is changed, or any way made to abhor its object; but when it would carry us to sin against God; this disorder and evil, the will abhorreth.

2. The misery also which sin hath procured, as he discerneth, so he bewaileth. It is impossible that the soul now living, should look either on its trespass against God, or its own self-procured calamity, without some compunction. He that truly discerneth, that he hath killed Christ, and killed himself, will surely in some measure be pricked to the heart. If he cannot weep, he can heartily groan; and his heart feels what his understanding sees.

3. The creature he now renounceth as vain, and turneth it out of his heart with disdain. Not that he undervalueth it or disclaimeth its use; but its idolatrous abuse, and its unjust usurpation.

There is a two-fold error very common in the descriptions of the work of conversion. The one of those who only mention the sinner's turning from sin to God, without mentioning the receiving Christ by faith. The other, of those who only mention a sinner's believing, and then think they have said all: nay, they blame them as legalists, who make any thing but the bare believing of the love of God in Christ to us, to be part of the work; and would persuade poor souls to question all their former comforts, and conclude the work to have been only legal, because they have made their change of heart and turning from sin, part of it; and have taken up part of their comfort from the reviewing of these.

Indeed, should they take up here without Christ, or take such a change instead of Christ, in whole or in part, the reprehension were just. But can Christ be the way, where the creature is the end; is he not the only way to the Father? Can we seek to Christ to reconcile us to God, while in our hearts we prefer the creature before him? in the soul of every unregenerate man, the creature is both God and Christ. Can Christ be believed in, where our own righteousness, or any other thing, is trusted in as our saviour?

The truth is; a turning from the creature to God, and not by Christ, is no true turning: so believing in Christ, while the creature hath our hearts, is no true believing. And therefore in the work of self-examination, whoever would find in himself a thorough sincere work, must find an entire work; even the one of these as well as the other.

In the review of which entire work there is no doubt but his soul may take comfort. And it is not

not to be made ſo light of, as moſt do, that ſcripture doth ſo ordinarily put repentance before faith, and make them jointly conditions of the goſpel: which repentance contains thoſe acts of the will before expreſſed.

It is true, if we take faith in the largeſt ſenſe, then it contains repentance in it; but if we take it ſtrictly, no doubt there are ſome acts of it go before repentance, and ſome follow after.

4. And as the Will is thus averted from the fore-mentioned objects; ſo at the ſame time doth it cleave to God the Father, and to Chriſt. Its firſt acting conſiſts eſpecially in intending and deſiring God for his portion and chief good; having been before convinced, that nothing elſe can be his happineſs, he now finds it in God; and therefore looks towards it. But it is yet rather with deſire than hope. For alas, the ſinner hath already found himſelf to be a ſtranger and an enemy to God, under the guilt of ſin, and curſe of the law, and knows there is no coming to him in peace till his caſe be altered; and therefore having before been convinced alſo, that only Chriſt is able and willing to do this, and having heard this mercy in the goſpel freely offered; his next act is, to accept of Chriſt as his Saviour and Lord.

Therefore both miſtake: they who only mention our turning to Chriſt, and they who only mention our turning to God in this work of converſion. St. *Paul*'s preaching was *Repentance towards God, and Faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* And *Life eternal* conſiſts, firſt, *in knowing the only true God*, and then, *Jeſus Chriſt whom He hath ſent*, John xvii. 3. The former is the natural part of the covenant. To take the Lord only for our God. The latter is the ſupernatural part, To take Chriſt only for our Redeemer. The former is firſt neceſſary, and implied in the latter.

Though repentance and good works are required to our full juſtification at judgment, as ſubſervient

vient to, or concurrent with faith; yet it is the nature of this juſtifying faith itſelf contained in accepting of Chriſt for Saviour and Lord. I call it accepting, it being principally an act of the will; but yet alſo of the whole ſoul. This accepting being that which the goſpel preſſeth to, and calleth the receiving or accepting Chriſt. I call it an affectionate accepting, though love ſeem diſtinct from faith, yet I take it as eſſential to that faith that juſtifies. To accept Chriſt without love, is not juſtifying faith. Nor doth love follow as a fruit, but immediately concur; as eſſential to a true accepting.

It is an accepting him for our Saviour and Lord. For in both relations will he be received, or not at all. It is not only to acknowledge his ſufferings, and accept of pardon and glory, but to acknowledge his ſovereignty, and ſubmit to his government, and way of ſaving.

The work (which Chriſt thus accepted of, is to perform) is, to bring the ſinners to God, that they may be happy in him; and this both really by his Spirit, and relatively in reconciling them, and making them ſons; and to preſent them perfect before him at laſt, and to poſſeſs them of the kingdom. The obtaining of theſe are the ſinner's lawful ends, in receiving Chriſt; and to theſe uſes doth he offer himſelf to us.

5. To this end doth the ſinner now enter into a cordial covenant with Chriſt. But he was never ſtrictly, nor comfortably in covenant with Chriſt till now. He is ſure Chriſt doth conſent, and now doth he cordially conſent himſelf; and ſo the agreement is fully made.

6. With this covenant concurs, a mutual delivery; Chriſt delivereth himſelf in all comfortable relations to the ſinner, and the ſinner delivereth up himſelf to be ſaved and ruled by Chriſt. Now doth the ſoul reſolvedly conclude, I have been blindly led by the fleſh, the world, and the devil, too long, almoſt to my deſtruction: I will now be wholly

wholly at the diſpoſal of my Lord, who hath bought me with his blood, and will bring me to his glory. And thus the compleat work of ſaving faith conſiſteth in this covenanting, or myſtical marriage of the ſinner to Chriſt.

Thus you have a naked enumeration of the eſſentials of this people of God: not a full portraiture of them in all their excellencies, nor all the notes whereby they are diſcerned. And though it will be part of the following application, to put you upon trial; yet becauſe the deſcription is now before your eyes, and theſe evidencing works are freſh in your memory, it will not be unſeaſonable, to take an account of your own eſtates, and to view yourſelves exactly in this glaſs, before you paſs. And I beſeech thee, reader, as thou haſt the hope of a Chriſtian, yea, or the reaſon of a man, to deal thoroughly, and ſearch carefully, and judge thyſelf as one that muſt ſhortly be judged by the righteous God; and faithfully anſwer to theſe few queſtions.

And firſt, Haſt thou been thoroughly convinced of an univerſal depravation, through thy whole ſoul? And an univerſal wickedneſs, through thy whole life? And how vile a thing this ſin is? And that by the tenor of that covenant which thou haſt tranſgreſſed, the leaſt ſin deſerves eternal death? Doſt thou conſent to this law, that it is true and righteous? Haſt thou perceived thyſelf ſentenced to this death by it, and been convinced by thy undone condition? Haſt thou farther ſeen the utter inſufficiency of every creature, either to be itſelf thy happineſs, or the means of curing this thy miſery, and making thee happy in God! Haſt thou been convinced, that thy happineſs is only in God as the end, and only in Chriſt as the way to him? and that thou muſt be brought to God by Chriſt, or periſh eternally? Haſt thou ſeen hereupon an abſolute neceſſity of enjoying Chriſt? and the full ſufficiency that is in him, to do for thee whatſoever thy caſe requireth, by reaſon of

the fulness of his satisfaction, the greatness of his power, dignity of his person, and the freeness of his promises? Hast thou discovered the excellency of this pearl to be worth thy selling all to buy it? Hath all this been joined with some sensibility; as the convictions of a man that thirsteth, of the worth of drink; and not been only a change in opinion, produced by reading and education, as a bare notion in the understanding? Hath it proceeded to an abhorring of sin? Have both thy sin and misery been a burthen to thy soul? And if thou couldst not weep, yet couldst thou groan under the insupportable weight of both? Hast thou renounced all thine own righteousness? Hast thou turned thy idols out of thy heart; so that the creature hath no more the sovereignty; but God and Christ. Dost thou accept of Christ as the only Saviour, and expect thy justification, recovery, and glory from him alone? Dost thou take him also for Lord and King? And are his laws the most powerful commanders of thy soul? Do they ordinarily prevail against the commands of the flesh, of Satan, of the greatest on earth that shall countermand? And against the interest of thy credit, profit, pleasure, or life? So that thy conscience is directly subject to Christ alone? Hath he the highest room in thy affection? so that though thou canst not love him as thou wouldst, yet nothing else is loved so much? Hast thou made a hearty covenant to this end? and delivered up thyself to him? and takest thyself for his and not thine own? Is it thy utmost care and watchful endeavour, that thou mayest be found faithful in this covenant? If this be truly thy case, thou art one of the people of God: and as sure as the promise of God is true, this blessed rest remains for thee. Only see thou abide in Christ, and continue to the end: for, *if any man draw back, his soul will have no pleasure in them.*

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CONCLUSION.

And thus I have explained to you the ſubject of my text: and ſhewed you darkly, what this reſt is, and briefly, who are this people of God. O that the Lord would now open your eyes, to diſcern and be affected with the glory revealed! that he would take off your hearts from thoſe dung-hill delights, and raviſh them with the views of theſe everlaſting pleaſures! that he would bring you into the ſtate of his holy and heavenly people, for whom alone this reſt remaineth! that you would exactly try yourſelves by the foregoing deſcription! that no ſoul of you might be ſo damnably deluded, as to take your natural or acquired parts for the characters of a Saint! O happy, and thrice happy you, if theſe ſermons might have ſuch ſucceſs with your ſouls, that ſo you might *die the death of the righteous, and your laſt end be like his.*

End of the Firſt Part.

THE

Saints Everlasting Rest.

PART II.

HEB. iv. 9.

There remaineth therefore a Rest for the People of God.

CHAP. I.

I Have been hitherto presenting to your understandings, the excellency of the Rest of the Saints. Let your hearts now cheerfully embrace it, and improve it, and I shall present it to you, in its respective uses.

I will lay together all those uses that most concern the ungodly, and then those that are proper to the godly themselves.

The unconceivable Misery of the Ungodly in their Loss of this Rest.

And first, if this Rest be for none but the people of God, what tidings is this to the ungodly world? That there is so much glory, but none for them: so great joys for the Saints of God, while they must consume in perpetual sorrows! If thou who

who readeſt theſe words, art a ſtranger to Chriſt, and to the holy nature and life of his people, and ſhalt live and die in the condition thou art now in; I am a meſſenger of the ſaddeſt tidings to thee, that ever yet thy ears did hear, that thou ſhalt never partake of the joys of heaven, nor have the leaſt taſte of the Saints eternal Reſt. I may ſay to thee, as *Ehud* to *Eglon*, I have a meſſage to thee from God: but it is a mortal meſſage, that as ſure as the work of God is true, thou ſhalt never ſee the face of God with comfort. This ſentence I am commanded to paſs upon thee! Take it as thou wilt, and eſcape if thou canſt. I know if thy heart and life were thoroughly changed, thy relation to Chriſt and eternity, would be changed alſo; he would then acknowledge thee for one of his people, and give thee a portion in the inheritance of his choſen. But if thou end thy days in thy preſent condition, as ſure as the heavens are over thy head, and the earth under thy feet; as ſure as thou liveſt and breatheſt in this air, ſo ſure ſhalt thou be ſhut out of this Reſt of the Saints, and receive thy portion in everlaſting fire. I expect that thou ſhouldſt in the pride of thy heart, turn upon me and ſay, and when did God ſhew you the book of life, or tell you who they are that ſhall be ſaved, and who ſhut out?

I will not anſwer thee according to thy folly; but plainly diſcover this thy folly to thyſelf, that if there be yet any hope, thou mayeſt recover thy underſtanding, and return to God and live. Firſt, I do not name thee, nor any other; I only conclude of the unregenerate in general, and of thee conditionally, if thou be ſuch an one. Secondly, I do not go about to determine who ſhall repent, and who ſhall not, much leſs that thou ſhalt never repent and come to Chriſt. Theſe things are unknown to me; I had far rather ſhew thee, what hopes thou haſt before thee, if thou wilt not ſit ſtill and loſe them: and I would far rather perſuade thee to hearken in time, before the door is

ſhut

ſhut againſt thee, that ſo thy ſoul may return and live, than tell thee that there is no hope of thy repenting and returning. But if the foregoing deſcription of the people of God do not agree with the ſtate of thy ſoul; is it then a hard queſtion, whether thou ſhalt ever be ſaved? Even as hard a queſtion, as whether God be true? Do I need to aſcend up into heaven, to know, *That without holineſs none ſhall ſee* God; or, *that only the pure in heart ſhall ſee* God? or, *that except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of* God? Cannot theſe be known without ſearching into God's counſels? And yet durſt thou aſk me, how I know who ſhall be ſaved? What need I go up to heaven to enquire that of Chriſt, which he came down to earth to tell us? And ſent his Spirit in his prophets and apoſtles to tell us? And hath left upon record to all the world? And though I do not know the ſecrets of thy heart, and therefore cannot tell thee by name whether it be thy ſtate, or no; yet if thou art but willing and diligent, thou mayeſt know thyſelf, whether thou art an heir of heaven, or not. And this is the main thing that I deſire, that if thou be yet miſerable, thou mayſt diſcern it, and eſcape it. But canſt thou eſcape, if thou neglect Chriſt and ſalvation? *If thou love father, mother, wife, children, houſes, lands, or thine own life better than* Chriſt; *if ſo, thou canſt not be his diſciple?* And conſequently canſt never be ſaved by him. Is it not as impoſſible for thee to be ſaved, *except thou be born again*, as it is for the devils themſelves to be ſaved? Nay, God hath more plainly and frequently ſpoken it in the Scripture, that ſuch ſinners as thou ſhall never be ſaved, than he hath done, that the devils ſhall never be ſaved. And doth not theſe tidings go cold to thy heart? Methinks, but that there is yet life and hope before thee, and thou haſt yet time and means to have thy ſoul recovered, the ſight of thy caſe ſhould even ſtrike thee dead with amazement. But becauſe I would fain have thee, if it be poſſible

ſible to lay it to heart, I will here ſtay a little longer, and ſhew thee, firſt, the greatneſs of thy loſs; ſecondly, the aggravation of thy unhappineſs in this loſs; thirdly, the poſitive miſeries that thou muſt endure, with their aggravations.

Firſt, The ungodly in their loſs of heaven, loſe all that glorious perſonal perfection, which the people of God there enjoy. They loſe that ſhining luſtre of the body, ſurpaſſing the brightneſs of the ſun. Though even the bodies of the wicked will be raiſed incorruptible, yet that will be ſo far from being a happineſs to them, that it only makes them capable of the more exquiſite torments. They would be glad then if every member were a dead member, that it might not feel the puniſhment inflicted on it; and the whole body were a rotten carcaſe, or might again lie down in duſt and darkneſs. Much more do they want that immortal perfection which the bleſſed partake of; thoſe holy diſpoſitions; that bleſſed conformity to the holineſs of God; that chearful readineſs to his will; that perfect rectitude of all their actions: inſtead of theſe they have their old ulcerous deformed ſouls, that perverſeneſs of will, that diſorder in their faculties, that loathing of good, that love to evil, that violence of paſſion, which they had on earth. It is true, their underſtandings will be much cleared, both by the ceaſing of temptation and deluding objects, and by the ſad experience which they will have in hell, of the falſehood of their former conceits and deluſions. But the evil diſpoſition is never the more changed; they have the ſame diſpoſitions ſtill, and would commit the ſame ſins, if they could: they want but opportunity; certainly they ſhall have none of the glorious perfections of the Saints, either in ſoul or body. There will be a greater difference between theſe wretches and the glorified Chriſtian, than there is betwixt a toad and the ſun in the firmament.

But the great loſing of the damned will be their loſs of God, they ſhall have no comfortable relation

tion to him: nor communion with him: *As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge;* but bade him, *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways;* so God will abhor to retain them in his household, or to give them entertainment in his fellowship and glory. He will never admit them to the inheritance of his saints, nor endure them to stand amongst them in his presence; but bid them, *Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I know you not.* Now these men dare believe the Lord, if not blaspheme, in calling him by the title of their Father; how boldly and confidently do they daily approach him with their lips, and indeed reproach him in their formal prayers, with that appellation! as if God would father the devil's children! or, as if the slighters of Christ, the friends of the world, the haters of godliness, or any that delight in iniquity, were the offspring of heaven! They are ready now, to lay confident claims to Christ as if they were sincere believers. But when that time is come, Christ shall separate his followers from his foes, and his faithful friends from his deceived flatterers, where then will be their presumptuous claim? Then they shall find that God is not their father, but their foe, because they would not be his people. And as they would not consent that God should by his Spirit dwell in them, so shall not these evil doers dwell with him: the tabernacles of wickedness shall have no fellowship with him: nor the wicked inhabit the city of God: *for without are dogs, sorcerers, whoremongers, murderers, idolaters, and whatsoever loveth and maketh a lie.* God is first enjoyed in part on earth, before he can be fully enjoyed in heaven. It is only they that walked with him here, who shall live and be happy with him there. Oh, little doth the world know what a loss that soul hath, who loseth God! What were the world but a dungeon, if it had lost the sun? What were the body, but a loathsome carrion, if it had lost the soul? Yet all these are nothing to the loss of God. So that as the enjoyment of God, is the heaven of the Saints; so

ſo the loſs of God is the hell of the ungodly. And as the enjoying of God is the enjoying of all; ſo the loſs of God is the loſs of all.

Thirdly, As they loſe God; ſo they loſe all thoſe delightful affections and actions, by which the bleſſed feed on God: that tranſporting knowledge: thoſe raviſhing views of his glorious face: the inconceivable pleaſure of loving God: the apprehenſions of his infinite love to us: the conſtant joys which his Saints are taken up with, and the rivers of conſolation wherewith he doth ſatisfy them. Is it nothing to loſe all this? The employment of a king in ruling a kingdom, doth not ſo far exceed the employment of the vileſt ſlave, as this heavenly employment exceedeth his.

Fourthly, They ſhall be deprived of the bleſſed ſociety of Angels and glorified Saints. Inſtead of being companions of thoſe happy ſpirits, and numbered with thoſe joyful and triumphing kings, they muſt now be members of the corporation of hell, where they ſhall have companions of a far different nature. While they lived on earth, they loathed the Saints, they impriſoned, baniſhed them, and caſt them out of their Societies, or at leaſt they would not be their companions in glory. Now you are ſhut out of that company, from which you firſt ſhut out yourſelves; and are ſeparated from them, whom you would not be joined with. You could not endure them in your town, nor ſcarce in the kingdom; you took them as *Ahab* did *Elias*, for the *troublers of the land*; and as the apoſtles were taken for *men that turned the world upſide down*. If any thing fell out amiſs, you thought all was through them. When they were dead or baniſhed, you were glad they were gone; and thought the country was well rid of them. They moleſted you with their faithful reproving your ſin: their holy converſation troubled you. You ſcarce ever heard them pray or ſing praiſes in their families, but it vexed you; and you envied their liberty of worſhipping God. And is it then any wonder if you be ſeparated from them hereafter?

ter? The day is near when they will trouble you no more: betwixt them and you, will be a great gulf ſet, that thoſe that would paſs from thence to you (if any had a deſire to eaſe you with a drop of water) cannot, neither can they paſs to them, who would go from you.

CHAP. II.

The Aggravation of the Loſs of Heaven to the Ungodly.

I KNOW many will be ready to think, if this be all, they do not much care: what care they for loſing the perfections above? What care they for loſing God, his favour or his preſence? They lived merrily without him on earth, and why ſhould it be ſo grievous to be without him hereafter? And what care they for being deprived of that love, and joy, and praiſing of God? They never taſted ſweetneſs in the things of that nature; or what care they for being deprived of the fellowſhip of Angels and Saints? They could ſpare their company in this world well enough, and why may they not be without it in the world to come? To make theſe men therefore underſtand the truth of their future condition, I will here annex theſe two things:

1. I will ſhew you why this loſs will be intolerable, and moſt tormenting then, though it ſeem as nothing now.

2. I will ſhew you what other loſſes will accompany theſe: which though they are leſs in themſelves, yet will now be more ſenſibly apprehended.

1. Then, that this loſs of heaven will be moſt tormenting, may appear by theſe conſiderations.

1. The underſtandings of the ungodly will be then cleared, to know the worth of that which they have loſt. Now they lament not the loſs of God,

God, becauſe they never knew his excellency, nor the loſs of that holy employment and ſociety, for they were never ſenſible what they were worth. A man that loſt a jewel, and took it but for a common ſtone, is never troubled at his loſs; but when he comes to know what he has loſt, then he lamenteth it.

Though the underſtandings of the damned will not then be ſanctified; yet they will be cleared from a multitude of errors. They think now that their honour, their eſtates, their pleaſures, their health and life, are better worth their labour, than the things of another world; but theſe things which had their hearts, have left them in miſery, when they know by experience, the things which before they did but read and hear of, they will be quite in another mind. They would not believe the water would drown till they were in the ſea; nor that the fire would burn, till they were caſt into it; but when they feel it they will eaſily believe. All that error of their mind, which made them ſet light by God, and abhor his worſhip, and vilify his people, will then be removed by experience; their knowledge ſhall be increaſed, that their ſorrows may be increaſed. Doubtleſs theſe poor ſouls would be (comparatively) happy, if their underſtandings were wholly taken from them, if they had no more knowledge than idiots, or brute beaſts; or if they knew no more in hell, than they did upon earth, their loſs and miſery would then leſs trouble them.

How happy would they now think themſelves, if they did not know there was ſuch a place as heaven? Now when their knowledge would help to prevent their miſery, they will not know: but then when their knowledge will but feed their conſuming fire, they ſhall know whether they will or no.

2. The loſs of heaven will more torment them then, becauſe as the underſtanding will be cleared, ſo it will be more enlarged, and made more capacious, to conceive the worth of that glory which they

they have loſt. The ſtrength of their apprehenſions, as well as the truth of them, will then be increaſed. What deep apprehenſions of the wrath of God, of the madneſs of ſinning, of the miſery of ſinners, have theſe ſouls that now endure this miſery, in compariſon of thoſe on earth that do but hear of it? What ſenſible apprehenſions of the worth of life, hath the condemned man that is going to be executed, in compariſon of what he was wont to have in the time of his proſperity? Much more will the actual deprivation of eternal bleſſedneſs make the damned exceeding apprehenſive of the greatneſs of their loſs: as a large veſſel will hold more water than a ſhell, ſo will their more enlarged underſtandings contain more matter to feed their torment, than now their ſhallow capacity can do.

3. And as the damned will have deeper apprehenſions of the happineſs they have loſt, ſo will they have a cloſer application of this doctrine to themſelves, which will exceedingly tend to increaſe their torment. It will then be no hard matter to them to ſay, This is my loſs, and this is my everlaſting miſery. The want of this is the main cauſe why they are ſo little troubled at their condition; they are hardly brought to believe that there is ſuch a ſtate of miſery, but more hardly to believe that it is like to be their own. This makes ſo many ſermons to be loſt, and all threatenings and warnings prove in vain. Let a miniſter of Chriſt ſhew them their miſery ever ſo plainly, they will not be perſuaded that they are ſo miſerable. Let him tell them of the glory they muſt loſe, and the ſufferings they muſt feel, and they think it is not they whom he means. We find in all our preaching, by ſad experience, that it is one of the hardeſt things in the world to bring a wicked man to know that he is wicked; a man who is in the way to hell, to know that he is in that way; or to make a man ſee himſelf in a ſtate of wrath and condemnation: how ſeldom do you hear men, after the plaineſt diſcovery of their con-

condemned eſtate, cry out, *I am the man!* Or to acknowledge, that if they die in their preſent condition, they are undone for ever!

There is no perſuading men of their miſery till they feel it, except the Spirit of the Almighty perſuade them.

Oh, but when they find themſelves ſuddenly in the land of darkneſs, perceive by the execution of the ſentence that they were indeed condemned, and feel themſelves in the ſcorching flames, and ſee that they are ſhut out of the preſence of God for ever, it will then be no ſuch difficult matter to convince them of their miſery; this particular application of God's anger to themſelves, will then be the eaſieſt matter in the world; then they cannot chuſe but know and apply it, whether they will or no.

4. Again, As the underſtanding and conſciences of ſinners will be ſtrengthened, ſo will their affections be more lively and enlarged: as judgment will be no longer blinded, nor conſcience ſtifled, ſo the affections will be no longer ſtupified. A hard heart now makes heaven and hell ſeem but trifles: and when we have ſhewed them everlaſting glory and miſery, they are as men half aſleep, they ſcarce take notice what we ſay, our words are caſt as ſtones againſt a hard wall, which fly back in the face of him that caſteth them. We talk of terribly aſtoniſhing things, but it is to dead men that cannot comprehend it: we ſpeak to rocks, rather than to men; the earth will as ſoon tremble as they. But when theſe dead wretches are revived, what paſſionate ſenſibility! What working affections! What pangs of horror! What depth of ſorrow, will there then be! How violently will they fly in their own faces! How will they rage againſt their former madneſs! The lamentations of the moſt paſſionate wife for the loſs of her huſband, or of the tendereſt mother for the loſs of her children, will be nothing to theirs for the loſs of heaven. O the ſelf-accuſing, and tormenting fury of thoſe forlorn wretches! How they

they will even tear their own hearts, and be God's executioners upon themselves! I am persuaded, as it was none but themselves that committed the sin, and themselves that were the meritorious cause of their sufferings, so themselves will be the chief executioners of those sufferings; God will have it for the clearing of his justice: even Satan himself, as he was not so great a cause of their sinning as themselves, so he will not be so great an instrument of their torment. How happy would you think yourselves then, if you were turned into rocks, or any thing that had neither passion or sense! How happy were you, if you could now feel, as lightly as you were wont to hear! And if you could sleep out the time of execution, as you did the time of the sermons that warned you of it! But your stupidity is gone, it will not be.

5. Moreover, it will much increase the torment of the damned, that their memories will be as large and strong as their understanding and affections. Were their loss never so great, and their sense of it never so passionate, yet if they could but lose the use of their memory, those passions would die, and that loss, being forgotten, would little trouble them. But as they cannot lay by their life and being, so neither can they lay aside any part of that being. Understanding, conscience, affections, memory, must all live to torment them, which should have helped to their happiness. And as by these they should have fed upon the love of God, and drawn forth perpetually the joys of his presence; so by these must they now feed upon the wrath of God, and draw forth continually the pains of his absence.

And yet these men would never be brought to consider; but in the latter days (saith the Lord) they shall perfectly consider it: when they are ensnared in the works of their own hands; when God hath arrested them, and judgment is past upon them, and vengeance is poured out upon them

them to the full, then they cannot chuse but consider it whether they will or no. Now they have no leisure to consider, nor any room in their memories for the things of another life. But then they shall have leisure enough, they shall be engraven upon the tables of their hearts. God would have had the doctrine of their eternal state to have been written on the posts of their doors, on their houses, on their hands, and on their hearts: and seeing they rejected this counsel of the Lord, therefore shall it be written always before them in the place of their thraldom, that which way soever they look, they may still behold it.

I will briefly lay down some of those considerations, which will thus feed the anguish of these damned wretches.

1. It will torment them to think of the greatness of the glory which they have lost. Oh, if it had been that which they could have spared, it had been a small matter: or, if it had been a loss reparable with any thing else; if it had been health, or wealth, or friends, or life, it had been nothing; but to lose that *exceeding, eternal weight of glory!*—

2. It will torment them to think of the possibility that once they were in of obtaining it. Then they will remember, the time was, when I was in as fair a possibility of the kingdom as others: I was set upon the stage of the world; if I had played my part wisely and faithfully, now I might have been amongst yonder blessed Saints, who am now tormented with these damned fiends! The Lord did set before me life and death, and having chosen death, I deserve to suffer it; the prize was once held out before me; if I had run well, I might have obtained it; if I had striven, I might have had the mastery; if I had fought valiantly, I might have been crowned.

3. It will yet more torment them to remember, not only the possibility, but the great probability that once they were in to obtain the crown. It will

will then wound them to think, why, I had once the gales of the Spirit ready to have aſſiſted me. I was fully purpoſed to have been another man, to have cleaved to Chriſt, and to have forſaken the world; I was almoſt reſolved to have been wholly for God: I had even caſt off my old companions, and yet I turned back, and loſt my hold, and broke my promiſes, and ſlackened my purpoſes; almoſt God had perſuaded me to be a real Chriſtian, and yet I conquered thoſe perſuaſions. What workings were in my heart! When a faithful miniſter preſſed home the truth. O how fair was I once for heaven! I had almoſt had it, and yet I have loſt it; if I had but followed on to ſeek the Lord, and blown up the ſparks of deſire which were kindled in me, I had now been bleſſed among the Saints.

4. Yet further, it will much add to their torment to remember, that God himſelf did condeſcend to entreat them: how long he did wait, how freely he did offer, how lovingly he did invite, and how importunately he did ſolicit them! How the Spirit did continue ſtriving with their hearts, as if he were loath to take a denial: how Chriſt ſtood knocking at the door of their hearts, ſermon after ſermon, and one ſabbath after another crying out, Open, ſinner, open thy heart to the Saviour, And *I will come in and ſup with thee, and thou with me.* Why doſt thou thus delay? What doſt thou mean, that thou doſt not open to innocency? *How long ſhall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee.* Woe to thee. O unworthy ſinner! wilt thou not be made clean? Wilt thou not be pardoned and ſanctified, and made happy? When ſhall it once be? O that thou wouldeſt hearken to my word, and obey my goſpel. *Then ſhould thy peace be as a river, and thy righteouſneſs as the waves of the ſea: though thy ſins were as red as crimſon, I would make them white as ſnow: O that thou waſt but wiſe to conſider this! And that thou wouldeſt in time remember thy latter end, before the evil days come upon thee, and the years draw nigh, when thou ſhalt ſay of*

of all thy vain delights, I have no pleaſure in them? Why ſinner! Shall thy Maker thus beſpeak thee in vain? Shall the God of all the world beſeech thee to be happy, and beſeech thee to have pity upon thy own ſoul, and wilt thou not regard him? Why did he make thy ears, but to hear his voice? Why did he make thy underſtanding but to conſider? Or thy heart, but to entertain the Son of his love? *Thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, conſider thy* ways!—

O how all theſe paſſionate pleadings of *Chriſt* will paſſionately tranſport the damned with ſelf-indignation! That they will be ready to tear out their own hearts. How freſh will the remembrance of them be ſtill in their minds, lancing their ſouls with renewed torments? What ſelf-condemning pangs will it raiſe within them, to remember, how often Chriſt would have gathered them to himſelf, *Even as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but they would not?* Then will they cry out againſt themſelves, How juſtly is all this befallen me? Muſt I tire out the patience of Chriſt? Muſt I make the God of heaven to follow me in vain, till I had wearied him with crying to me, *Repent, return!* Muſt the Lord of all the world thus wait upon me, and all in vain! Oh, how juſtly is that patience now turned into fury, which falls upon my ſoul with irreſiſtible violence! When the Lord cried out to me in his word, *How long will it be before thou wilt be made clean and holy!* My heart, or at leaſt my practice anſwered, Never: I will never be ſo preciſe: and now when I cry out, How long will it be till I be freed from this torment, and ſaved with the Saints! How juſtly do I receive the anſwer! *Never, never.*—O ſinner, I beſeech thee, for thy own ſake, think of this while the voice of mercy ſoundeth in thine ears! Yet patience continueth waiting upon thee: canſt thou think it will do ſo ſtill? Yet the offers of Chriſt and life are made to thee in the goſpel, and the hand of God is ſtretched out to thee; but will it ſtill be thus? The Spirit hath not yet done ſtriving with thy heart: but doſt

thou know how soon he may turn away, and give thee over to a reprobate sense. Thou hast yet life and time, and strength, and means; but dost thou think this life will always last? Oh *seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near: he that hath an ear to hear let him hear* what Christ now speaketh to his soul. And, *To day, while it is called to-day, harden not your hearts, lest he swear in his wrath that you shall never enter into his Rest.* For ever blessed is he, that hath an heart and ear, while Christ hath a calling voice.

5. Again, it will be a most cutting consideration to these, to remember on what easy terms they might have escaped their misery. If their work had been to remove mountains, to conquer kingdoms, then the impossibility would somewhat assuage the rage of their self-accusing conscience. If their conditions for heaven had been, the satisfying of justice for all their transgressions, the suffering of all the law that lay upon them, or bearing the burthen which Christ was fain to bear; this were nothing but to suffer hell to escape hell. But their conditions were of another nature. The yoke was easy, and the burthen was light, which Jesus Christ would have laid upon them; his commandments were not grievous. It was but to repent, and accept him as their Saviour; study his will, and seek his face; to remove all other happiness, but that which he procureth us, and to take the Lord alone for our supreme good; to renounce the government of the world and the flesh, and to submit to his meek and gracious government; to forsake the ways of our own devising, and to walk in his holy delightful way; to engage ourselves to this by covenant with him, and to continue faithful in that covenant.

These were the terms on which they might have enjoyed the kingdom. And was there any thing unreasonable in all this? Was it a hard bargain to have heaven upon these conditions?

When the poor wretch shall look back upon

theſe eaſy terms which he refuſed, and compare the labour of them with the pains and loſs which he there ſuſtaineth, it cannot be now conceived how it will rent his very heart! Ah, thinks he, how juſtly do I ſuffer all this, who would not be at ſo ſmall pains to avoid it? Where was my underſtanding when I neglected thy gracious offer: when I called the Lord a hard maſter? And thought his pleaſant ſervice to be a bondage, and the ſervice of the devil and my fleſh to be the only freedom? Was I not a thouſand times worſe than man, when I cenſured the holy way of God, as needleſs preciſeneſs? And cried out on it, as an intolerable burthen? When I thought the laws of Chriſt too ſtrict: and all too much, that I did for the life to come? O what had all the trouble of duty been, in compariſon of the trouble I now ſuſtain? Or all the ſufferings for Chriſt and well-doing in compariſon of theſe ſufferings that I muſt undergo for ever? What if I had ſpent my days in the ſtricteſt life. What if I had lived ſtill upon my knees? What if I had loſt my credit with men? And had been hated of all men for the ſake of Chriſt? And borne the reproach of the fooliſh? What if I had been impriſoned, or baniſhed, or put to death? O, what had all this been to the miſeries that I now ſuffer? Would not the heaven which I have loſt, have recompenſed all my loſſes? And ſhould not all my ſufferings have been there forgotten? What if Chriſt had bid me do ſome great matter? As, to live in continual tears and ſorrow, to ſuffer death a hundred times over? (Which he did not.) Should I not have done it? How much more when he only ſaid, *Believe and be ſaved: ſeek my face, and thy ſoul ſhall live: love me above all, walk in my ſweet and holy way, take up thy croſs and follow me, and I will ſave thee from the wrath of God, and I will give thee everlaſting life.* O gracious offer! O eaſy terms! O curſed wretch, that would not be perſuaded to accept them.

6. This alſo will be a moſt tormenting conſideration, to remember what they ſold their eternal

welfare for. When they compare the value of the pleaſures of ſin, with the value of the recompenſe of reward, how will the vaſt diſproportion aſtoniſh them! To think of a few pleaſant cups or ſweet morſels, a little eaſe, or how to delight the fleſh; and then to think of everlaſting glory! What a vaſt difference between them will then appear? To think, this is all I had for my ſoul, my God, my hopes of bleſſedneſs! It cannot poſſibly be expreſſed how theſe thoughts will tear his heart. Then will he exclaim againſt his folly, O miſerable wretch! Did I ſet my ſoul to ſale for ſo baſe a price! Did I part with my God for a little dirt and droſs? And ſell my Saviour as *Judas*, for a little ſilver? O for how ſmall a matter have I parted with my happineſs! I had but a dream of delight, for my hopes of heaven, and now I am waked, it is all vaniſhed: where are now my honours and attendance? My morſels are now turned to gall, and my cup to wormwood. They delighted me no longer than while they were paſſing down; and is this all that I have had for the ineſtimable treaſure? O what a mad exchange did I make? What if I had gained all the world, and loſt my ſoul? But alas! How ſmall a part of the world was it, for which I gave up my part of glory?—O that ſinners would think of this, when they are ſwimming in delights, and ſtudying to be rich and honourable! When they are deſperately venturing upon known tranſgreſſion, and ſinning againſt the checks of conſcience!

7. Yet much more will it add unto their torment, when they conſider that all this was their own doings, and that they wilfully procured their own deſtruction: had they been forced to ſin, it would much abate the rage of their conſciences, or if they were puniſhed for another man's tranſgreſſions; or if any other had been the chief author of their ruin: but to think, that it was the choice of their own wills, and that God had ſet them in ſo free a condition, that none in the world could have forced them to ſin againſt their wills, this will

will be a griping thought. What! (thinks this wretched creature) had I not enemies enough in the world, but I muſt be an enemy to myſelf! God would neither give the devil, nor the world ſo much power over me, as to force me to commit the leaſt tranſgreſſion. If I had not conſented, their temptations had been in vain; they could but entice me, it was myſelf that yielded, and did the evil: and muſt I needs lay hands upon my own ſoul, and embrue my hands in my own blood? Who ſhould pity me, who pitied not myſelf, and who brought all this upon mine own head? Never did God do me any good, or offer me any thing for the welfare of my ſoul, but I reſiſted him: he hath heaped mercy upon me, and renewed one deliverance after another, to entice my heart to him, and yet was I never heartily willing to ſerve him: he had gently chaſtiſed me, and made me groan under the fruit of my diſobedience, and yet, though I promiſed largely in my affliction, I was never unfeignedly willing to obey him.

Thus will it gnaw the hearts of theſe wretches to remember, that they were the cauſe of their own undoing: and that they wilfully and obſtinately perſiſted in their rebellion, and were mere volunteers in the ſervice of the devil. They would venture, they would go on, they would not hear him that ſpoke againſt it: God called to them to hear and ſtay, but they would not: men called; conſcience called, and ſaid to them, (as *Pilate*'s wife,) *Have nothing to do with that hateful ſin; for I have ſuffered many things becauſe of it:* but they would not hear; their will was their law, their rule, and their ruin.

8. Laſtly. It will yet make the wound in their conſciences much deeper, when they ſhall remember, that it was not only their own doing, but that they were at ſo much coſt and pains for their own damnation. What great undertakings did they engage in to effect their ruin, to reſiſt God, to con-

quer the Spirit, to overcome the power of mercies, judgments, and the Word itſelf, to ſilence conſcience? All this they did take upon them and perform. What a number of ſins did they manage at once; what difficulties did they ſet upon! Even the conquering the power of reaſon itſelf. What dangers did they adventure on, though they walked in continual danger of the wrath of God, and knew he could lay them in the duſt in a moment; though they knew they lived in danger of eternal perdition, yet would they run upon all this. What did they forſake for the ſervice of Satan, and the pleaſures of ſin! They forſook their God, their conſcience, their beſt friends, their hopes of ſalvation.

Oh the labour that it coſteth poor wretches to be damned! Sobriety they might have at a cheaper rate, and a great deal of health and eaſe too; and yet they will rather have gluttony and drunkenneſs, with poverty, and ſhame, and ſickneſs, with the outcries and lamentations of wife and children, and conſcience itſelf. Contentedneſs they might have with eaſe and delight; yet will they rather have covetouſneſs and ambition; though it coſt them ſtudy, and cares, and fears, and labour of body and mind, and continual unquietneſs and diſtraction of ſpirit. Though their anger be nothing but a tormenting themſelves, and revenge and envy conſume their ſpirits, and keep them upon a continual rack; though uncleanneſs deſtroy their bodies, and eſtates, and names; yet will they do and ſuffer all this, rather than ſuffer their ſouls to be ſaved.

O how the reviews of this will feed the flames in hell! With what rage will theſe damned wretches curſe themſelves, and ſay, Was damnation worth all my coſt and pains? Was it not enough that I periſhed through my negligence, and that I ſat ſtill while Satan played his game, but I muſt ſeek ſo diligently my own perdition? Might I not have been damned on free coſt, but I muſt

muſt purchaſe it ſo dearly? I thought I could have been ſaved without ſo much ado; and could I not have been deſtroyed without ſo much ado? How well is all my care, and pains, and violence now requited! Muſt I work out ſo laborioufly my own damnation, when God commanded me to work out my ſalvation? O, if I had done as much for heaven as I did for hell, I had ſurely had it. I cried out of the tedious way of godlineſs; and yet I could be at more pains for Satan and for death. If I had loved Chriſt as ſtrongly as I did my pleaſures, my profits, and honours, and thought on him as often, and ſought him as painfully, O how happy had I now been! But juſtly do I ſuffer the flames of hell, who would rather buy them ſo dear, than have heaven when it was purchaſed to my hands.

Thus I have ſhewed you ſome of thoſe thoughts which will aggravate the miſery of theſe wretches for ever. O that God would perſuade thee, who readeſt theſe words, to take up theſe thoughts now, for the preventing of that inconceivable calamity, ſo that thou mayeſt not take them up in hell as thy own tormentor.

CHAP. III.

They ſhall loſe all Things that are comfortable, as well as Heaven.

HAVING ſhewed you thoſe conſiderations which will then aggravate their miſery, I am next to ſhew you their additional loſſes, which will aggravate it. For as *godlineſs hath the promiſe both of this life, and that which is to come;* and as God hath ſaid, *that if we firſt ſeek his kingdom and righteouſneſs, all things elſe ſhall be added to us:* ſo alſo are the ungodly threatened with the loſs both of ſpiritual and corporal bleſſings: and becauſe

they ſought not firſt Chriſt's kingdom and righteouſneſs, therefore ſhall they loſe both it, and that which they did ſeek, and there ſhall be taken from them even that little which they have. If they could but have kept their preſent enjoyment, they would not have much cared for the loſs of heaven: but catching at the ſhadow for the ſubſtance, they now find they have loſt both: and that when they rejected Chriſt, they rejected all things. If they had loſt and forſaken all for Chriſt, they would have found all again in him; for he would have been all in all to them: but now they have forſaken Chriſt for other things, they ſhall loſe Chriſt, and that alſo for which they did forſake him.

But I will particularly open to you ſome of their other loſſes.

1. They ſhall loſe their preſent conceit of their intereſt in God, and of his favour towards them and of their part in the merits and ſufferings of Chriſt. This falſe belief doth now ſupport their ſpirits, and defend them from the terrors that would elſe ſeize upon them: but what will eaſe their trouble when this is gone? When they can believe no longer, they will be quiet no longer. If a man conceit that he is in ſafety, his conceit may make him chearful till his miſery comes, and then both his conceit and comforts vaniſh.

There is none of this believing in hell; nor any perſuaſions of pardon or happineſs, nor any boaſting of their honeſty, nor juſtifying themſelves. This was but Satan's ſtratagem, that being blindfold, they might follow him the more boldly; but then he will uncover their eyes, and they ſhall ſee where they are.

2. Another addition to the miſery of the damned will be this: that with the loſs of heaven, they ſhall loſe all their hopes. In this life, though they were threatened with the wrath of God, yet their hope of eſcaping it did bear up their hearts. We can now ſcarce ſpeak with the vileſt drunkard, or ſwearer,

ſwearer, or ſcorner, but he hopes to be ſaved for all this. O happy world, if ſalvation were as common as this hope; even thoſe whoſe helliſh nature is written in the face of their converſation, whoſe tongues plead the cauſe of the devil, and ſpeak the language of hell; yet ſtrongly hope for heaven, though the God of heaven have told them no ſuch ſhall ever come there. Nay, ſo ſtrong are men's hopes, that they will diſpute the cauſe with Chriſt himſelf at judgment, and plead *their eating and drinking in his preſence, their preaching in his name, and caſting out devils*, (and theſe are more probable arguments than our baptiſm, and common profeſſion, and name of Chriſtians,) they will ſtifly deny that ever they *neglected Chriſt, in hunger, nakedneſs, priſon*, till Chriſt confute them with the ſentence of their condemnation. Though the heart of their hopes will be broken at their death, yet, it ſeems, they would fain plead for ſuch hope at the general judgment.

But, O the ſad ſtate of theſe men, when they muſt bid farewel to all their hopes! When their hopes ſhall all periſh with them! *The eyes of the wicked ſhall fail, and their hope ſhall be as the giving up of the ghoſt.* The giving up the ghoſt is a fit, but terrible reſemblance of a wicked man's giving up his hopes.

For *Firſt*, as the ſoul departeth not from the body without the greateſt pain, ſo doth the hope of the wicked depart. O the pangs that ſeize upon the ſoul of a ſinner at death and judgment, when he is parting with all his hopes!

Secondly, The ſoul departeth from the body ſuddenly, in a moment, which hath there delightfully continued ſo many years; juſt ſo doth the hope of the wicked depart.

Thirdly, The ſoul which then departeth, will never return to live with the body in this world any more; and the hope of the wicked, when it departeth, taketh an everlaſting farewel of his ſoul. A miracle of refurrection ſhall again con-

join the ſoul and body, but there ſhall be no ſuch miraculous reſurrection of the damned's hope.

Methinks it is the moſt doleful ſpectacle that this world affords, to ſee an ungodly perſon dying; his ſoul and hopes departing together! With what a ſad change he appears in another world! Then if a man could but ſpeak with that hopeleſs ſoul, and aſk it, Are ye now as confident of ſalvation as you were wont to be? Do you now hope to be ſaved as ſoon as the moſt godly? O what a ſad anſwer would he return!

O that careleſs ſinners would be awaked to think of this in time! If thou be one of them, who art reading theſe lines, I do here, as a friend adviſe thee, that as thou wouldſt not have all thy hopes deceive thee, when thou haſt moſt need, thou preſently try them, whether they will prove current at the touchſtone of the Scripture; and if thou find them unſound, let them go, whatſoever ſorrow they coſt thee. Reſt not till thou canſt give a reaſon of all thy hopes: till thou canſt prove that they are hopes which grace, and not nature, hath wrought; that they are grounded upon Scripture promiſes; that they purify thy heart; that they quicken and cool thy endeavours in godlineſs; that the more thou hopeſt, the leſs thou ſinneſt, and the more painful thou art in following on thy work, and not grown more looſe and careleſs by the increaſing of their hopes: that thou art willing to have them tried, and fearful of being deceived; that they ſtir up their deſires of enjoying what thou hopeſt for, and deferring thereof is the trouble of thy heart.

There is a hope which is a ſingular grace and duty; and there is a hope which is a notorious dangerous ſin: ſo conſequently there is a deſpair which is abſolutely neceſſary to thy ſalvation.

I would not have thee deſpair of the ſufficiency of the blood of Chriſt to ſave thee, if thou believe, and heartily obey him; nor of the willingneſs of God to pardon and ſave thee, if thou be

ſuch

ſuch a one; nor yet abſolutely of thy own ſalvation, becauſe while there is life and time, there is hope of thy converſion, and ſo of thy ſalvation; nor would I draw thee to deſpair of finding Chriſt, if thou doſt but heartily ſeek him; but this is the deſpair that I would perſuade thee to, as thou loveſt thy ſoul; that thou deſpair of ever being ſaved, except thou be born again; or of ſeeing God without holineſs; or eſcape periſhing, except thou ſuddenly repent; or of ever having part in Chriſt, except thou love him above father, mother, or thine own life: or of ever truly loving God, or being his ſervant, whilſt thou loveſt the world, and ſerveſt it.

Theſe things I would have thee deſpair of, and whatever elſe God hath told thee ſhall never come to paſs. And when thou haſt ſadly ſearched into thine own heart, and findeſt thyſelf in any of theſe caſes, I would have thee deſpair of ever being ſaved in the ſtate thou art in. This kind of deſpair is one of the firſt ſteps to heaven.

Conſider, if a man be quite out of his way, what muſt be the firſt means to bring him in again? Why a deſpair of ever coming to his journey's end, in the way that he is in. If his home be eaſtward, and he is going weſtward, as long as he hopes he is in the right, he will go on; and as long as he goes on hoping, he goes on further amiſs. Therefore when he meets with ſomebody that aſſures him he is clean out of the way, and brings him to deſpair of coming home except he turn back again; then he will return, and then he may hope.

Why ſinner, juſt ſo it is with thy ſoul: thou art out of the way to heaven, and in that way thou haſt proceeded many a year: yet thou goeſt on quietly, and hopeſt to be ſaved, becauſe thou art not ſo bad as many others. Why, I tell thee, except thou throw away theſe hopes, and ſee that thou haſt all this while been quite out of the way to heaven; I ſay, till thou be brought to this, thou

wilt never return and be ſaved. Who will turn out of his way while he hopes he is right? Remember what I ſay; till thou feel God convincing thee, that the way which thou haſt lived in will not ſerve thy turn, and ſo break down thy former hopes, there is yet no ſaving work wrought upon thee, how well ſoever thou mayeſt hope of thyſelf. Yea thus much more, if any thing keep thy ſoul out of heaven, there is nothing in the world likelier to do it, than thy falſe hopes of being ſaved, while thou art out of the way to ſalvation.

3. Another additional loſs, aggravating their loſs of heaven, is this, they ſhall loſe all their carnal mirth; they will ſay to themſelves (as *Solomon* doth) *of their laughter, thou art mad; and of their mirth, what doſt thou?* Eccleſ. ii. 2. Their pleaſant conceits are then ended, and their mercy tales are all told. *Their mirth was but as the crackling of thorns under a pot.* Eccleſ. vii. 6. It made a blaze for a while, but it was preſently gone, and will return no more. They ſcorned to entertain any ſaddening thoughts; the talk of death and judgment was irkſome to them, becauſe it damped their mirth; they could not endure to think of their ſin, or danger, becauſe theſe thoughts did ſadden their ſpirit: they knew not what it was to weep for ſin, or to humble themſelves under the mighty hand of God: they could laugh away ſorrow, and ſing away cares, and drive away theſe melancholy thoughts: they thought if they ſhould meditate, and pray, and mourn, as the godly do, their lives would be a continual miſery.

Alas, poor ſouls! What a miſery then will that life be, where you ſhall have nothing but ſorrow; intenſe, heart-piercing, multiplied ſorrow? When you ſhall have neither the joys of the Saints, nor your own former joys? Do you think there is one merry heart in hell? Or one joyful countenance, or jeſting tongue? You cry now, *a little mirth is worth a great deal of ſorrow:* but

but ſure a little godly ſorrow, which would have ended in eternal joy, had been more worth than a great deal of your fooliſh mirth, which will end in ſorrow.

4. Another additional loſs will be this: they ſhall loſe all their ſenſual delights: that which they eſteemed their chief good, their heaven, their god, muſt they loſe, as well as God himſelf.

O what a fall will the proud ambitious man have from the top of his honours! As his duſt and bones will not be known from the duſt and bones of the pooreſt beggars; ſo neither will his ſoul be honoured or favoured any more than theirs. What a number of the great, noble, and learned, are now ſhut out of the preſence of Chriſt! They are ſhut out of their well contrived houſes, and ſumptuous buildings; their comely chambers, with coſtly hangings; their ſoft beds, and eaſy couches. They ſhall not find their gallant walks, their curious gardens with variety of beauteous fruits and flowers: their rich paſtures and pleaſant meadows, and plenteous harveſts, and flocks and herds. Their tables will not be ſpread and furniſhed, nor they ſo punctually attended and obſerved. They have not their variety of dainty fare, or ſeveral courſes to pleaſe their appetites to the full. The rich man there fareth not deliciouſly every day, neither ſhall he wear there his purple and fine linen.

O that ſinners would remember this in the midſt of their jollity, and ſay one to another, we muſt ſhortly reckon for this. Will the remembrance of it then be comfortable or terrible? Will theſe delights accompany us to another world? How ſhall we look each other in the face, if we meet in hell? Will not the memorial of them be then our torment? Come, as we have ſinned together, let us pray together before we ſtir, that God would pardon us; and let us enter into a promiſe to one another that we will do this no more, but will meet together in the worſhip of God, and help one

one another towards heaven, as oft as we have met for our ſinful merriments, in helping to deceive and deſtroy each other.——This would be the way to prevent this ſorrow, and a courſe that would comfort you, when you look back upon it hereafter.

CHAP. V.

The Greatneſs of the Torments of the Damned diſcovered.

HAVING thus ſhewed you how great their loſs is, who are ſhut out of Reſt, and how it will be aggravated by thoſe additional loſſes which will accompany it, I ſhall next here ſhew you the greatneſs of thoſe poſitive ſufferings which will accompany this loſs. But I will not meddle with the quality of thoſe ſufferings, but only ſhew their greatneſs in ſome few diſcoveries leſt the careleſs ſinner, while he hears of no other puniſhment but that of loſs, ſhould think he can bear that well enough. That there are, beſides the loſs of happineſs actual, ſenſible torments for the damned, is a matter beyond all doubt, and that they will be exceeding great, may appear by theſe arguments following.

1. From the principal author of them, which is God himſelf: as it was no leſs than God whom the ſinner had offended, ſo it is no leſs than God that will puniſh them for their offences. He hath prepared thoſe torments for his enemies. His continued anger will ſtill be devouring them. His breath of indignation will kindle the flames. His wrath will be an intolerable burthen to their ſouls. If it were but a creature that they had to do with, they might better bear it. But woe to him that falls under the ſtrokes of the Almighty! They ſhall feel to their ſorrow, *that it is a fearful thing*

to fall into the hands of the living God. It were nothing in compariſon to this, if all the world were againſt them, or if the ſtrength of all the creatures were united in one to inflict their penalty. What a conſuming fire is his wrath? *If it be kindled here, and that but a little,* how do we wither before it, *as the graſs that is cut down before the ſun?* How ſoon doth our ſtrength decay and turn to weakneſs, and our beauty to deformity? The flames do not ſo eaſily run through the dry ſtubble, as the wrath of God will feed upon theſe wretches. Oh, they that could not bear a priſon or a gibbet, for Chriſt, ſcarce a few ſcorns, how will they now bear the devouring fire?

2. The place or ſtate of torment, is purpoſely ordained for the glorifying of God's juſtice. As all the works of God are great and wonderful, ſo thoſe above all, which were ſpecially intended for the eminent advancing of ſome of his attributes. When he would glorify his power, he made the worlds. The comely order of all, and ſingular creatures, declare his wiſdom. His Providence is ſhewn, in ſuſtaining all things and maintaining order, and attending his excellent ends, amongſt the confuſed, perverſe, tumultuous agitation of a world of wicked, fooliſh, ſelf-deſtroying miſcreants. When a ſpark of this wrath doth kindle upon the earth, the whole world, ſave only eight perſons, are drowned. *Sodom*, *Gomorrah*, *Admah*, and *Zeboim*, are burnt with fire from heaven, to aſhes. The ſea ſhuts her mouth upon ſome. The earth doth open and ſwallow others. The peſtilence deſtroyeth them by thouſands. The preſent deplorable ſtate of the *Jews* may fully teſtify this to the world. And yet the glorifying of the two great attributes of mercy and juſtice, is intended moſt eminently for the life to come. As therefore when God will purpoſely glorify his mercy, he will do it in a way that is now beyond the comprehenſion of the ſaints that muſt enjoy it; ſo that the blood of his Son, and the enjoyment of himſelf immediately in glory, ſhall not be thought too high

high an honour for them: so also when the time comes that he will purposely manifest his justice, it shall appear to be indeed the justice of God. The everlasting flames of hell will not be thought too hot for the rebellious; and when they have there burned through millions of ages, he will not repent him of the evil which is befallen them. Oh, wo to the soul that is thus set up for a butt, for the wrath of the Almighty to shoot at! and for a bush that must burn in the flames of his jealousy, and never be consumed.

3. Consider who shall be God's executioners of their torment; and that is, first, Satan; secondly, themselves. First, He that was here so successful in drawing them from Christ, will then be the instrument of their punishment, for yielding to his temptations. It was a pitiful sight to see the man possessed, that was bound with chains, and lived among tombs; and that other that would be cast into the fire and into the water: but alas, that was nothing to the torment that Satan puts them to in hell: that is the reward he will give them for all their service; for their rejecting the commands of God, and forsaking Christ, and neglecting their souls at his persuasion. Ah, if they had served Christ as faithfully as they did Satan, he would have given them a better reward. 2. And it is most just also, that they should there be their own tormentors, that they may see that their whole destruction is of themselves; and they who were wilfully the meritorious cause, should also be the efficient in their own sufferings: and then who can they complain of but themselves.

4. Consider also that their torment will be universal, not upon one part alone, while the rest are free; but as all have joined in the sin, so must all partake of the torment. The soul, as it was the chief in sinning, shall be the chief in suffering; and as it is of a more spiritual and excellent nature than bodies are, so will its torments far exceed bodily sufferings. And as the joys of the soul far

far ſurpaſs all ſenſual pleaſures, ſo the pains of the ſoul ſurpaſs corporal pains.

And it is not only a ſoul, but a ſinful ſoul that muſt ſuffer: the guilt that ſtill remains upon it, will make it fit for the wrath of God to work upon: as fire will not burn except the fuel be combuſtible; but if the wood be dry, how fiercely will it burn then? The guilt of their ſins will be as tinder to gunpowder to the damned ſoul, to make the flames of hell take hold upon them with fury.

And as the ſoul, ſo alſo the body muſt bear its part. That body that muſt needs be pleaſed whatſoever became of its eternal ſafety, ſhall now be paid for its unlawful pleaſures. That body which was ſo carefully looked to, ſo tenderly cheriſhed. That body which could not endure heat or cold, or an ill ſmell, or a loathſome ſight: Oh what muſt it now endure! How are its haughty looks now taken down! How little will thoſe flames regard its comlineſs and beauty! But as death did not regard it, nor the worms regard it, but as freely feed upon the face of the proud and luſtful dames, and the heart of the moſt ambitious lords or princes, as if they had been but beggars; ſo will their tormentors then as little pity their tenderneſs, or reverence their lordlineſs. Thoſe eyes which were wont to be delighted with curious ſights, muſt then ſee nothing, but what ſhall amaze and terrify them; an angry God above them, and thoſe Saints whom they ſcorned, enjoying the glory which they have loſt; and about them will be only devils and damned ſouls: ah then how ſadly will they look back and ſay, Are all our feaſts, our games and revels come to this? Then thoſe ears which were wont to be delighted with muſic, ſhall hear the ſhricks and cries of their damned companions; children crying out againſt their parents, that gave them encouragement and example in evil, huſbands crying out upon their wives, and wives upon their huſbands; maſters and ſervants curſing each other; miniſters and

people;

people; magistrates and subjects, charging their misery upon one another, for discouraging in duty, conniving in sin, and being silent or formal, when they should have plainly told one another of their misery, and forewarned them of their danger. Thus will soul and body be companions in calamity.

5. And the greater by far will their torments be, because they shall have no comfort left to mitigate them. In this life, when a minister told them of hell, or conscience began to trouble their peace, they had comforts enough at hand to relieve them: their carnal friends were all ready to comfort them but now they have not a word of comfort either for him or themselves. Formerly they had their business, their company, their mirth, to drive away their fears; they could drink away their sorrows; or play them away, or sleep them away, or at least, time did wear them away; but now all these remedies are vanished. They had a hard, a presumptuous unbelieving heart, which was a wall to defend them against troubles of mind; but now their experience hath banished these, and left them naked to the fury of those flames. Yea formerly *Satan* himself was their comforter, and would unsay all that the minister said against them, as he did to our first mother; *Hath* God *said, Ye shall not eat? Ye shall not surely die.* So doth he now. Doth God tell you that you shall lie in hell! It is no such matter; God is more merciful. He doth but tell you so to fright you from sinning. Or if there be a hell, what need you fear it? Are not you Christians? And shall you not be saved by Christ? Was not his blood shed for you? Ministers may tell what they please, they would make men believe that they shall all be damned, except they will fit themselves to their humour.--Thus, as the Spirit of Christ is the comforter of the Saints, so Satan is the comforter of the wicked: for he knows if he should now disquiet them, they would no longer serve him; or if fears or doubts should trouble them, they would bethink themselves

ſelves of their danger. Never was a thief more careful leſt he ſhould awake the people, when he is robbing the houſe, than Satan is, not to awake a ſinner. But when the ſinner is dead, and he hath his prey, then he hath done flattering and comforting them. While the ſight of ſin and miſery might have helped to ſave them, he took all the pains he could, to hide it from their eyes: but when it is too late, and there is no hope left, he will make them ſee and feel to the utmoſt. Oh, which way will the forlorn ſinner then look for comfort? They that drew him into the ſnare, and promiſed him ſafety, now forſake him, and are forſaken themſelves. His ancient comforts are taken from him, and the righteous God, whoſe forewarning he made light of, will now make good his word againſt him to the leaſt tittle.

6 But the great aggravation of this miſery, will be its eternity. That when a thouſand millions of ages are paſt, their torments are as freſh to begin as at the firſt day. If there were any hope of an end, it would eaſe them to foreſee it; but when it muſt be for ever ſo, that thought is intolerable: much more will the miſery itſelf be. They never heartily repented of their ſin, and God will never repent him of their ſuffering. They broke the laws of the eternal God, and therefore ſhall ſuffer eternal puniſhment. They knew it was an everlaſting kingdom which they refuſed; and therefore what wonder if they be everlaſtingly ſhut out of it? It was their immortal ſouls that were guilty of the treſpaſs, and therefore muſt immortally ſuffer the pains. What happy men would they think themſelves, if they might have lain ſtill in their graves, or continued duſt, or ſuffered no worſe than the gnawing of thoſe worms! Oh that they might but there lie down again! What mercy now would it be to die! And how will they call and cry out for it! O Death, whither art thou gone? Now come and cut off this doleful life! O that theſe pains would break my heart, and end my being! O that I might once die at laſt! Oh that

I had

I had never had a being!——Theſe groans will the thoughts of eternity wring from their hearts. They were wont to think the ſermon long, and prayer long; how long then will they think theſe endleſs torments? What difference is there betwixt the length of their pleaſures and of their pains! The one continued but for a moment, the other endureth through all eternity. Oh that ſinners would lay this thought to heart! Remember how time is almoſt gone. Thou art ſtanding all this while at the door of eternity; and death is waiting to open the door, and put thee in. Go ſleep out but a few more nights, and ſtir up and down on earth a few more days, and then thy nights and days ſhall end: thy thoughts, and cares, and diſpleaſures, and all ſhall be devoured by eternity: thou muſt enter upon the ſtate which ſhall never be changed.—As the joys of heaven are beyond our conceiving, ſo alſo are the pains of hell. Everlaſting torment is inconceivable torment.

But methinks I hear the obſtinate ſinner, deſperately reſolving, If I muſt be damned, there is no remedy; rather than I will live ſo preciſely, I will put it to the venture; I ſhall eſcape as well as the reſt of my neighbours, and we will even bear it as well as we can.———Alas, poor creature! I would thou didſt but know what it is that thou doſt ſo boldly venture on: I dare ſay thou wouldſt ſleep this night but very unquietly. Wilt thou leave thyſelf no room for hope? Art thou ſuch an implacable enemy to Chriſt and thy own ſoul? And doſt thou think indeed that thou canſt bear the wrath of God, and go away ſo eaſily with theſe eternal torments! Yet let me beg this of thee, that before thou doſt ſo flatly reſolve, thou wouldſt lend thine attention to theſe queſtions.

Firſt. Who art thou, that thou ſhouldſt bear the wrath of God? Art thou a god; or art thou a man? What is thy ſtrength to undergo ſo much? Is it not as the ſtrength of wax or ſtubble to reſiſt the fire? Or as chaff to the wind; or as before the whirlwind?

whirlwind? Was he not as ſtout a man as thyſelf, who cried to God, *Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro? And wilt thou purſue the dry ſtubble?* If thy ſtrength were as iron, and thy bones as braſs, thou couldſt nor bear. If thy foundation were as the earth, and thy power as the heavens, yet ſhouldſt thou periſh at the breath of his indignation. How much more when thou art but a little, creeping, breathing clay, kept a few days from ſtinking, and from being eaten with worms, by the mere ſupport of and favour of him whom thou thus reſiſted?

Secondly. If thou be ſo ſtrong, and thy heart ſo ſtout, why do thoſe ſmall ſufferings ſo diſmay thee? If thou haſt but a fit of the gout or ſtone, what groans doſt thou utter? The houſe is filled with thy complaints. If thou ſhouldſt but loſe a leg or an arm, thou wouldſt make a great matter of it. If thou loſe thine eſtate, and fall into poverty and diſgrace; how heavily wouldſt thou bear any one of theſe? And yet all theſe laid together, will be one day accounted a happy ſtate, in compariſon of that which is ſuffered in hell. Let me ſee thee make as light of convulſive, gouty, rheumatic pains, when they ſeize upon thee, and then the ſtrength of thy ſpirit will appear. Alas, how many ſuch boaſters as thyſelf have I ſeen made ſtoop and eat their words? And when God hath but let out a little of his wrath, That *Pharaoh*, who before aſked, *Who is the* Lord? hath cried, *I have ſinned.*

Thirdly, If all this be nothing, go try thy ſtrength by ſome corporal torment; as *Bilney* before he went to the ſtake, would firſt try his finger in the candle; ſo do thou: hold thy finger awhile in the fire, and feel there whether thou canſt endure the fire of hell. *Auſtin* mentioneth a chaſte Chriſtian woman, who being tempted to uncleanneſs by a lewd ruffian, ſhe deſired him for her ſake to hold his finger one hour in the fire? He anſwered, it is an unreaſonable requeſt: how much more unreaſonable is it (ſaid ſhe) that I ſhould burn

burn in hell for the ſatisfying your luſt? So ſay I to thee; if it be an intolerable thing to ſuffer the heat of the fire for a year, or a day, or an hour, what will it be to ſuffer ten thouſand times more for ever? What if thou wert to ſuffer *Lawrence's* death, to be roaſted upon a gridiron; or to be ſcraped or pricked to death, as other martyrs were? If thou couldſt not endure ſuch things as theſe, how wilt thou endure the eternal flames?

Fourthly, If thou be ſo fearleſs of that eternal miſery, why is the leaſt foretaſte of it ſo terrible? Didſt thou never feel ſuch a thing as a tormenting conſcience? If thou haſt not, thou ſhalt. Didſt thou never ſee and ſpake with a man that lived in deſparation, or in ſome degree of thoſe wounds of ſpirit that was near deſpair? How uncomfortable was their conference? how burdenſome their lives? Nothing doth them good which they poſſeſs; the ſight of friends, or houſe, or goods, which refreſh others, is a trouble to them: they feel no ſweetneſs in meat or drink; they are weary of life, and fearful of death. What is the matter with theſe men? If the miſery of the damned itſelf can be endured, why cannot they more eaſily endure theſe little ſparks.

Fifthly, Tell me faithfully, what if thou ſhouldſt but ſee the devil appear to thee in ſome terrible ſhape, would it not daunt thee? What if thou ſhouldſt meet him in thy way home, or he ſhould ſhew himſelf to thee at night in thy bed chamber, would not thy heart fail thee, and thy hair ſtand an end? I could name thee thoſe that have been as confident as thyſelf, who, by ſuch a ſight, have been ſo appalled, that they were in danger of being driven out of their wits. Or what if ſome damned ſoul, of thy former acquaintance, ſhould appear to thee, would not this amaze thee? Alas! What is this to the torment of hell? Canſt thou not endure a ſhadow to appear before thee? O how wilt thou endure to live with them for ever, where thou ſhalt have no other company but devils

devils and damned ſpirits; and thalt not only ſee them, but be tormented with them, and by them!

Laſtly, Let me aſk thee, if the wrath of God be to be made ſo light of, why did the Son of God himſelf make ſo great a matter of it? When he had taken upon him the payment of our debt, and bore that puniſhment we had deſerved, it makes him ſweat water and blood; it makes the Lord of life to cry, *My ſoul is heavy, even to the death.* It makes him cry out upon the croſs, *My* God, *My* God, *why haſt thou forſaken me?* Surely if any one could have borne theſe ſufferings, it would have been Jeſus Chriſt. He had another meaſure of ſtrength to bear it than thou haſt.

Woe to poor ſinners for their mad ſecurity! Do they think to find that tolerable to them which was ſo heavy to Chriſt? Nay, the Son of God is caſt into a bitter agony, and bloody ſweat, under the curſe of the law only; and yet the feeble, fooliſh creatures make nothing to bear alſo the curſe of the goſpel: the good Lord bring theſe men to their right minds by repentance, leſt they buy their wit at too dear a rate.

And thus I have ſhewed you ſomewhat of their miſery, who now miſs of this Reſt prepared for the Saints. And now, reader, I demand thy reſolution, what uſe thou wilt make of all this? Shall it all be loſt to thee? Or wilt thou conſider it in good earneſt? Thou haſt caſt by many a warning of God, wilt thou do ſo by this alſo? Take heed what thou doſt, and how thou reſolveſt. God will not always ſtand warning and threatening. The hand of revenge is lifted up; the blow is coming and woe to him on whom it lighteth. Little thinkeſt thou how near thou ſtandeſt to thy eternal ſtate, and how near the pit, thou art dancing in thy jollity. If thy eyes were but opened, as they will be ſhortly, thou wouldſt ſee all this that I have ſpoken before thine eyes, without ſtirring from the place in which thou ſtandeſt. Doſt thou throw by the book, and ſay, it ſpeaks of nothing but hell and damnation? Thus thou

uſeſt

uſeſt alſo to complain of the miniſter; but wouldſt thou not have us tell thee of theſe things? Should we be guilty of the blood of thy ſoul, by keeping ſilent that which God hath charged us to make known? Wouldſt thou periſh in eaſe and ſilence, and alſo have us to periſh with thee, rather than diſpleaſe thee, by ſpeaking the truth? If thou wilt be guilty of ſuch inhuman cruelty, God forbid we ſhould be guilty of ſuch ſottiſh folly!

There are few preachers ſo ſimple, but they know that this kind of preaching is the ready way to be hated of their hearers: and the deſire of the favour of men is ſo natural, that few delight in ſuch a diſpleaſing way. But I beſeech thee conſider, are theſe things true, or are they not? If they were not true, I would heartily join with thee againſt any miniſter that ſhould offer to preach them, and to affright poor people when there is no cauſe. But if theſe threatenings be the words of God, what wretch art thou that wouldſt not hear them, or conſider them? Why, what is the matter? If thou be ſure that thou art one of the people of God, this doctrine will be a comfort to thee: but if thou be unregenerate, methinks thou ſhouldſt be as fearful to hear of heaven as of hell, except the bare name of heaven or ſalvation be ſufficient. Sure there is no doctrine concerning heaven in all the Scripture that can give thee any comfort, but upon the ſuppoſal of thy converſion; what comfort is it to thee, to hear that there is a reſt remaining to the people of God, except thou wouldſt have a miniſter to preach of heaven or hell to thee. His preaching heaven and mercy to thee, can be nothing elſe but to entreat thee to ſeek them; but he can make thee no promiſe of it, but upon condition of thy obeying the goſpel; and his preaching hell, is but to perſuade thee to avoid it. And is not this doctrine fit for thee to hear? Indeed if thou wert quite paſt hope of eſcaping it, then it were in vain to tell thee of hell, but rather let thee take a few merry hours whilſt thou mayſt; but as long as thou art alive, there

is

is hope of thy recovery, and therefore all means muſt be uſed to awake thee from thy lethargy.

Oh that ſome ſon of thunder, who could ſpeak as *Paul*, till the hearers tremble, were now to preach this doctrine to thee! Alas; as terrible, as you think I ſpeak, yet is it not the thouſandth part of what muſt be felt; for what heart can now conceive, or what tongue expreſs the pains of thoſe ſouls that are under the wrath of God? Ah, that ever blind ſinners would wilfully bring themſelves to ſuch unſpeakable miſery! You will then be crying to *Jeſus Chriſt*, O mercy! Oh pity! Why, I do now in the name of the Lord Jeſus cry to thee: Oh have mercy, have pity upon thine own ſoul! Shall God pity thee, who wilt not be entreated to pity thyſelf? If thy horſe ſee but a pit before him, thou canſt ſcarcely force him in; and wilt thou ſo obſtinately caſt thyſelf into hell, when the danger is foretold thee? *Oh who can ſtand before the Lord, and who can abide the fierceneſs of his anger?* Methinks, thou ſhouldſt need no more words, but preſently caſt away thy ſins, and deliver up thyſelf to Chriſt. Reſolve on it immediately, and let it be done, that I may ſee thy face in Reſt among the Saints. The Lord perſuade thy heart to it without longer delay: but if thou be hardened unto death, and there be no remedy, yet do not ſay another day, but that thou waſt faithfully warned, and that thou hadſt a friend that would fain have prevented thy damnation.

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CHAP. V.

The ſecond Uſe: reprehending the general Neglect of this Reſt, and exciting to Diligence in ſeeking it.

I COME now to the ſecond uſe. If there be ſo certain and glorious a Reſt, Why is there no more ſeeking after it? One would think that a man that did but once hear of ſuch unſpeakable

glory, and did believe what he heard to be true, ſhould be tranſported with deſire after it, ſhould almoſt forget to eat or drink, and mind and care for nothing elſe, and ſpeak of and enquire after nothing, but how to get this treaſure! And yet people who hear it daily, and profeſs to believe it, do as little mind it, or care, or labour for it, as if they had never heard of any ſuch thing, or did not believe one word that they hear.

I ſhall apply this reproof more particularly to four ſorts of men, Firſt, The worldly-minded, who is ſo taken up in ſeeking the things below, that he hath neither heart nor time to ſeek this Reſt.

May I not well ſay to theſe men, as *Paul* to the *Galatians* in another caſe, Fooliſh ſinners! *Who hath betwitched you?* It is not for nothing that divines uſe to call the world a witch; for as in witchcraft, men's lives, ſenſes, goods, or cattle are deſtroyed by a ſtrange, ſecret, unſeen power of the devil, of which a man can give no natural reaſon; ſo here men will deſtroy their own ſouls in a way quite againſt their own knowledge. Would not a man wonder, that is in his right ſenſes, to ſee what riding and running, what ſcrambling and catching there is for a thing of nought, while eternal reſt lies by neglected! What contriving and caring, what fighting and bloodſhed, to get a ſtep higher in the world than their brethren, while they neglect the kingly dignity of the Saints! What inſatiable purſuit of fleſhly pleaſures, while they look upon the praiſes of God, which is the joy of angels, as a burden! What unwearied diligence is there in raiſing their poſterity, enlarging their poſſeſſions, gathering a little ſilver or gold! Yea perhaps for a poor living from hand to mouth, while in the mean time their judgment draweth near: and yet how it ſhall go with them then, or how they ſhall live eternally, did never put them to one hour's ſober conſideration.

What riſing up early, ſitting up late, labouring and caring year after year to maintain themſelves and

and children in credit till they die; but what shall follow after, that they never think on; and yet these men cry to us, May not a man be saved without so much ado! How early do they rouze up their servants to their labour? [Up, come away to work, we have this to do, and that do;] but how seldom do they call them, [Up, you have your soul to look to, you have everlasting life to provide for; up to prayer, to the reading of the Scripture.]

What a gadding up and down the world is here, like a company of ants upon a hillock, taking incessant pains to gather a treasure, which death will spurn abroad; as if it were such an excellent thing to die in the midst of wealth and honours! Or as if it would be such a comfort to a man in another world, to think that he was a lord, or a knight, or a gentleman, or a rich man on earth? What hath this world done for its lovers and friends, that it is so eagerly followed, and painfully sought after, while Christ and heaven stand by and few regard them? Or what will the world do for them for the time to come! The common entrance into it is through anguish and sorrow. The passage through it is with continual care and labour. The passage out of it is with the greatest sharpness and sadness of all. What then doth cause men so much to follow and affect it? O unreasonable, bewitched men! Will mirth and pleasure stick close to you? Will gold and worldly glory prove fast friends to you in the time of your greatest need? Will they hear your cries in the day of your calamity? If a man should say to you as *Elias* did to *Baal*'s priests, *Cry aloud:* Oh riches, or honour now help us! Will they either answer or relieve you! Will they go along with you to another world, and bribe the Judge, and bring you off clear; or purchase you a room among the blessed? Why then did so rich a man want a drop of water to cool his tongue? Or are the sweet morsels of present delight and honour of more worth than eternal Rest? And will they recompence the loss

of that enduring treasure? Can there be the least hope of any of these? What then is the matter? Is it only a room for our dead bodies that we are so much beholden to the world for? Why, this is the last and longest courtesy that we shall receive from it. But we shall have this whether we serve it or no; and even that homely, dusty dwelling it will not afford us always neither; it shall possess our dust but till the resurrection. How then doth the world deserve so well at man's hands, that they should part with Christ and their salvation to be its followers! Ah vile, deceitful world! How complaining, Oh the world hath deceived me, and undone me! And yet succeeding sinners will take no warning.

So this is the first sort of neglecters of Heaven which fall under this reproof.

2. The second sort here to be reproved, are the profane, ungodly, presumptuous multitude, who will not be persuaded to be at so much pains for salvation, as to perform the common outward duties of religion. Yea, though they are convinced that those duties are commanded, yet will they not be brought to the common practice of them. If they have the gospel preached in the town where they dwell, it may be they will give the hearing to it one part of the day, and stay at home the other; or if the master come to the congregation, yet part of his family must stay at home. If they want the plain and powerful preaching of the gospel, how few are there in a whole town, who will travel a mile or two to hear abroad, though they will go many miles to market for their bodies.

And though they know the Scripture is the law of God, by which they must be acquitted or condemned in judgment: and that it is the property of every blessed man to delight in this law, and to meditate in it day and night; yet will they not be at the pains to read a chapter once a day, nor to acquaint their families with this doctrine of salvation. But if they carry a Bible to church,

and let it lie by them all the week, this is the moſt uſe that they make of it. And though they are commanded to *pray without ceaſing:* and to *pray alway, and not to faint;* to *continue in prayer, and watch in the ſame with thankſgiving;* yet will they not pray conſtantly with their families, or in ſecret. You may hear in their houſes two oaths for one prayer. Or if they do any thing this way, it is uſually but a running over of a few formal words which they have got at their tongues-end, as if they came on purpoſe to make a jeſt of prayer, and to mock God and their own ſouls.

Alas, he that only reads in a book that he is miſerable, and what his ſoul ſtands in need of, but never felt himſelf miſerable, or felt his ſeveral wants, no wonder if he muſt alſo fetch his prayer from his book only, or at fartheſt from the ſtrength of his memory. *Solomon*'s requeſt to God was, That *what prayer or ſupplication ſoever ſhould be made by any man, or by all the people, when every man ſhall know his own ſore, and his own grief, and ſhall ſpread forth his hands before* God, *that* God *would then hear and forgive,* 2 Chron. vi. 29. 30. If theſe men did thus know and feel, every man the ſore and the grief of his own ſoul, he ſhould neither need ſo much to urge them to prayer, nor to teach then how to perform it. Whereas now they envite God to be backward in giving, by their backwardneſs in aſking; and to be weary of relieving them, by their own being weary of begging; and to be ſeldom and ſhort in his favours, as they are in their prayers; and to give them but common and outward favours, as they put up but common and outſide requeſts. Yea, their cold and heartleſs prayers invite God to a flat denial; for what he aſks. Do not theſe men judge themſelves unworthy of heaven, who think it not worth their more conſtant and earneſt requeſts? If it be not worth aſking for, it is worth nothing. And yet if one ſhould go from houſe to houſe, through town and pariſh, and enquire at every houſe as you go, whether they do morning or

evening call their family together, and earnestly seek the Lord in prayer; how few would you find that constantly and conscientiously practise this duty? If every door were marked, where they do not thus call upon the name of God, that his wrath might be poured out upon that family, our towns would be as places overthrown by the plague, the people being dead within, and the mark of judgment without. I fear where one house would escape, ten would be marked out for death; and they might teach their doors to pray, *Lord have mercy upon us*; because the people would not pray themselves. But especially if you could see what men do in their secret chambers, how few should you find in a whole town that spend one quarter of an hour, morning and night, in earnest supplication to God for their souls! Oh, how little do these men set by eternal Rest!

Thus do they slothfully neglect all endeavours for their own welfare, except some public duty in the congregation, which custom or credit doth engage them to. Persuade them to read good books, and they will not be at so much pains. Persuade them to learn the grounds of their religion in some catechism, and they think it toilsome slavery; fit for school-boys. Persuade them to sanctify the Lord's day, and to spend it wholly in hearing the word, and repeating it with their families, and prayer and meditation, and to forbear all their worldly thoughts and speeches; and what a tedious life do they take this to be; and how long may you preach to them, before they will be brought to it? As if they thought heaven were not worth all this ado.

3. The third sort that fall under this reproof, are these self-cozening, formal, lazy professors of religion, who will be brought to any outward duty, but to the inward work, they will never be persuaded. They will preach, or hear or read, or talk of heaven, or pray customarily or constantly in their families, and take part with the person and

and cauſes that are good, and deſire to be eſteemed amongſt the godly, but you can never bring them to the more ſpiritual duties, as to be conſtant and fervent in ſecret prayer; to be conſcientious in the duty of ſelf-examination, to be conſtant in meditation, to be heavenly minded, to watch conſtantly over their heart, and words and ways, to deny their bodily ſenſes their delights, to mortify the fleſh, and not make proviſion for it, to fulfil its luſts; to love and heartily forgive an enemy, and to prefer their brethren heartily before themſelves. The outſide hypocrites will never be perſuaded to any of theſe. Above all other, two ſorts there are of theſe hypocrites.

1. The ſuperficial, opinionative hypocrite.

2. The worldly hypocrite.

The former entertaineth that doctrine of the goſpel with joy; but it goes only into the ſurface of his ſoul, he never gives the ſeed any depth of earth. He changeth his opinion, and thereupon engageth for religion, as the right way, but it never melted and new moulded his heart, nor ſet up Chriſt there in full power and authority. As his religion is but opinion, ſo is his ſtudy, and conference, and chief buſineſs all about opinion. He is uſually an ignorant, proud, bold enquirer and babler about controverſies, rather than an humble embracer of the known truth, with love and ſubjection. You may conjecture by this bold and forward tongue, and conceitedneſs in his own opinions, and ſlighting the judgments and perſons of others, and ſeldom talking of the great things of Chriſt with ſerioufneſs and humility; that his religion dwelleth in the brain, and not in his heart: where the wind of temptation aſſaults him, he eaſily yieldeth, and it carrieth him away as a feather, becauſe his heart is empty, and not balanced and eſtabliſhed with Chriſt and grace. If this man's

judgment lead him into the ceremonious way, then doth he employ his chief zeal for ceremonies. If his judgment be againſt ceremonies, then his ſtrongeſt zeal is employed in ſtudying, talking, diſputing againſt them, and cenſuring the uſers of them. For, not having the eſſentials of Chriſtianity, he hath only the mint and cummin, the ſmaller matters of the law to lay out his zeal upon. You ſhall never hear any humble and hearty bewailings of his ſoul's imperfections, or any heartbleeding acknowledgments of his unkindneſſes to Chriſt, of any pantings and longings after him, from this man; but that he is of ſuch a judgment, or ſuch a religion or ſociety, or a member of ſuch a church. Herein doth he gather his greateſt comforts; but the inward and ſpiritual labours of a Chriſtian he will not be brought to.

The like may be ſaid of the worldly hypocrite, who choaketh the doctrine of the goſpel with the thorns of worldly cares and deſires. His judgment is convinced, that he muſt be religious, or he cannot be ſaved; and therefore he reads, and hears, and prays, and forſakes his former company and courſes; but becauſe his belief of the goſpel-doctrine is but wavering and ſhallow, he reſolves to keep his hold of preſent things; and yet to be religious, that ſo he may have heaven, when he can keep the world no longer. This man's judgment may ſay, God is the chief good, but his heart and affections never ſaid ſo, but looked upon God as to be tolerated rather than the flames of hell, but not deſired before the felicity on earth. In a word, the world hath more of his affections than God, and therefore is his God. This he might eaſily know and feel, if he would judge impartially, and were but faithful to himſelf. And though this man does not gad after novelties in religion as the former; yet will he ſet his ſails to the wind of worldly advantage. And as a man whoſe ſpirits are ſeized on by ſome peſtilential malignity, is feeble and faint, and heartleſs in all that he does; ſo this man's ſpirits being poſſeſſed by

by the plague of this malignant, worldly diſpoſition, how faint is he in ſecret-prayer! How ſuperficial in examination and meditation! How feeble in heart-watchings, and humbling, mortifying endeavours! How nothing at all in loving and walking with God, rejoicing in him, or deſiring him! So that both theſe, and many other ſorts of lazy hypocrites there are, who, though they will trudge on with you in the eaſy outſide of religion, yet will never be at the pains of inward and ſpiritual duties.

4. And even good men themſelves deſerve this reproof, for being too lazy ſeekers of everlaſting Reſt. Alas, what diſproportion is there between our light and our heat? Our profeſſions and proſecution? Who makes that haſte, as if it were for heaven? How ſtill we ſtand! How idly we work! How we talk, and jeſt, and trifle away our time! How deceitful we do the work of God! How we hear, as if we heard not; and pray, as if we prayed not; and confer, and examine, and meditate, and reprove ſin, as if we did it not; and uſe the ordinances, as if we uſed them not; and enjoy Chriſt, as if we enjoyed him not! As if we had learned to uſe the things of heaven as the apoſtle teacheth us to uſe the world! Who would think that ſtood by us, and heard us pray in private, or public, that we are praying for no leſs than everlaſting glory? Should heaven be ſought no more earneſtly than thus? Methinks we are none of us all in good earneſt for our ſouls. We do but dally with the work of God, and play with Chriſt, as children play with their meat when they ſhould eat it; we hang upon ordinances from day to day, but we ſtir not ourſelves to ſeek the Lord.

I ſee a great many very conſtant in hearing and praying, but they do not hear and pray as if it were for their lives. Oh, what a frozen ſtupidity hath benumbed us! The plague of *Lot's* wife is upon us, as if we were changed into lifeleſs and immovable pillars. We are dying, and

we know it not, and yet we ſtir not; we are at the door of eternal happineſs or miſery, and yet we perceive it not: death knocks, and we hear it not: God cries to us, *To-day if you will hear my voice, harden not your hearts. Work while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work.* Now ply your buſineſs, now labour for your lives, now lay out all your ſtrength, now or never: and yet we ſtir no more than if we were half aſleep. What haſte do death and judgment make! How faſt do they come on! They are almoſt at us, and yet what little haſte make we! The ſpur of God is in our ſide; we bleed, we groan, and yet we do not mend our pace. Lord, what a ſenſeleſs, ſottiſh, earthly thing is a hard heart! That we will not go roundly and cheerfully toward heaven without all this ado! No, nor with it neither! Where is the man that is ſerious in his Chriſtianity? Methinks men every where make but a trifle of their eternal ſtate. They look after it but a little, by the bye; they do not make it the taſk and buſineſs of their lives.

To be plain with you, I think nothing undoes men ſo much as complimenting and jeſt in religion. Oh, if I were not ſick myſelf of the ſame diſeaſe, with what tears ſhould I mix this ink; and with what groans ſhould I expreſs theſe ſad complaints: and with what heart-grief ſhould I mourn over this univerſal deadneſs! Do the magiſtrates among us ſeriouſly perform their portion of the work? Are they zealous for God? Do they build up his houſe? Are they tender of his honour? Do they ſecond the word? Encourage the good? Relieve the oppreſſed? Compaſſionate the diſtreſſed? And fly in the face of ſin and ſinners, as being the diſturbers of our peace, and the only cauſe of all our miſeries? Do they ſtudy how to do the utmoſt they can for God? To improve their power and parts, and wealth, and honour, and all their intereſts for the greateſt advantage to the kingdom of Chriſt, as men that muſt ſhortly give an account of their ſtewardſhip?

Or

Or do they build their own houſes, and ſeek their advancements, and contend for their own honours, and do no more for Chriſt than needs they muſt, or than lies in their way, or than is put by others into their hands, or that ſtands with the pleaſing of their friends, or with their worldly intereſt?

And how few are thoſe miniſters that are ſerious in their work! Nay, how mightily do the very beſt fail in this! Do we cry out of man's diſobedience to the goſpel in the evidence and power of the Spirit, and deal with ſin, as that which is the fire in our towns and houſes, and by force pull them out of this fire? Do we perſuade our people, as thoſe that know the terrors of the Lord ſhould do? Do we preſs Chriſt and regeneration, and faith and holineſs, as men that believe indeed that without theſe they ſhall never have life? Do our bowels yearn over the ignorant, and the careleſs, and the obſtinate multitude as men that believe their own doctrine? When we look them in the face, do our hearts melt over them, leſt we ſhould never ſee their faces in reſt. Do we as *Paul*, tell them weeping, of their fleſhly and earthly diſpoſition? And teach them publicly, and from houſe to houſe, night and day with tears? And do we entreat them, as if it were indeed for their lives? That when we ſpeak of the joys and miſeries of another world, our people may ſee us affected accordingly, and perceive that we mean as we ſpeak? Or rather, do we not ſtudy words? As if a miniſter's buſineſs were to tell them a ſmooth tale of an hour long, and ſo look no more after them till the next ſermon.

Oh the formal, frozen, lifeleſs ſermons which we daily hear preached upon the moſt weighty, piercing ſubjects in the world! How gently do we handle thoſe ſins, which will handle ſo cruelly our peoples ſouls? And how tenderly do we deal with their careleſs hearts, not ſpeaking to them as to men that muſt be awakened or damned. We tell them of heaven and hell in ſuch a ſleepy tone,

and ſlight way, as if we were but acting a part in a play; ſo that we uſually preach our people aſleep with thoſe ſubjects, which one would think ſhould rather endanger the driving ſome beſide themſelves.

In a word, our want of ſeriouſneſs about the things of heaven, doth charm the ſouls of men into formality, and hath brought them to this cuſtomary, careleſs hearing, which undoes them. The Lord pardon the great ſin of the miniſtry in this thing, and, in particular, my own.

And are the people any more ſerious than magiſtrates and miniſters. How can it be expected? Reader, look but to thyſelf, and reſolve the queſtion. Aſk conſcience, and ſuffer it to tell thee truly, Haſt thou ſet thine eternal reſt before thine eyes as the great buſineſs, which thou haſt to do in this world? Haſt thou ſtudied, and cared, and watched, and laboured with all thy might, leſt any ſhould take thy crown from thee? Haſt thou made haſte, leſt thou ſhould come too late, and die before thy work be done? Hath thy heart been ſet upon it, and thy deſires and thy thoughts run out this way? Haſt thou preſſed on through crouds of oppoſition, *towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus?* When you have ſet your hand to the work of God, have you done it with all your might? Can conſcience witneſs your ſecret cries and groans, and tears? Can your families witneſs that you have taught them the fear of the Lord, and warned them all with earneſtneſs and unweariedneſs to remember God and their ſouls? Or that you have done but as much for them, as that damned glutton would have had *Lazarus* do for his brethren on earth, to warn them that they come not to that place of torment? Can your miniſters witneſs that they have heard you cry out, *What ſhall we do to be ſaved?* And that you have followed them with complaints againſt your corruptions, and with earneſt enquiries after the Lord? Can your neighbours about you witneſs, that you are ſtill learning

learning of them that are able to inſtruct you? And that you plainly and roundly reprove the ungodly, and take pains for the ſaving of your brethren's ſouls? Let all theſe witneſſes judge this day between God and you, whether you are in good earneſt about eternal Reſt.

But yet if you cannot diſcern your neglects, look but to yourſelves; within you, without you, to the work you have done. You can tell by his work whether your ſervant have loitered, though you did not ſee him; ſo you may by yourſelves. Is your love to Chriſt, your faith, your zeal, and other graces, ſtrong or weak? What are your joys? What is your aſſurance? Is all right and ſtrong, and in order within you? Are you ready to die, if this ſhould be the day? Do the ſouls, among whom ye have converſed, bleſs you? Why, judge by this, and it will quickly appear whether you have been labourers or loiterers.

CHAP. VI.

An Exhortation to Seriouſneſs in ſeeking Reſt.

I HOPE, reader, by this time thou art ſomewhat ſenſible, what a deſperate thing it is to trifle about eternal Reſt: and how deeply thou haſt been guilty of this thyſelf. And I hope alſo, that thou dareſt not now ſuffer this conviction to die: but art reſolved to be another man for the time to come: what ſayeſt thou? Is this thy reſolution? If thou wert ſick of ſome deſperate diſeaſe, and the phyſician ſhould tell thee, If thou wilt obſerve but one thing, I doubt not to cure thee, wouldſt thou not obſerve it? Why, if thou wilt obſerve but this one thing for thy ſoul, I make no doubt of thy ſalvation: if thou wilt now but ſhake off thy ſloth, and put to all thy ſtrength, and be a downright Chriſtian, I know not what can hinder thy happineſs. As far as thou art gone from God,

if

if thou now return and ſeek him with thy whole heart, no doubt but thou ſhalt find him. As unkindly as thou haſt dealt with Jeſus Chriſt, if thou didſt but feel thyſelf ſick and dead, and ſeek him heartily, and apply thyſelf in good earneſt to the obedience of his laws, thy ſalvation were as ſure as if thou hadſt it already; but as full as the ſatisfaction of Chriſt is, as free as the promiſe is, as large as the mercy of God is; yet if thou do but look on theſe, and talk of them, when thou ſhould greedily entertain them, thou wilt be never the better for them: and if thou ſhouldſt loiter when thou ſhouldſt labour, thou wilt loſe the crown. O fall to work then ſpeedily and ſeriouſly, and bleſs God that thou haſt yet time to do it: and though that which is paſt cannot be recalled, yet redeem the time now by doubling thy diligence.

And becauſe thou ſhalt ſee I urge thee not without cauſe, I will here adjoin a multitude of conſiderations to move thee: their intent and uſe is, to drive thee from delaying and from loitering in ſeeking Reſt. Whoever thou art, therefore, I entreat thee to rouze up thy ſpirit, and give me a while thy attention, and (as *Moſes* ſaid to the people) *Set thy heart to all the words that I teſtify to thee this day, for it is not a vain thing, but it is for thy life.* Weigh what I here write, with the judgment of a man; and the Lord open thy heart, and faſten his counſel effectually upon thee.

1. Conſider, our affections and actions ſhould be anſwerable to the greatneſs of the ends to which they are intended. Now the ends of a Chriſtian's deſires and endeavours are ſo great, that no human underſtanding on earth can comprehend them; whether you reſpect their proper excellency, exceeding importance, or their abſolute neceſſity.

Theſe ends are the glorifying of God, the ſalvation of our own and other men's ſouls, in eſcaping the torments of hell, and poſſeſſing the glory of heaven. And can a man be too much affected with things of ſuch moment? Can he deſire them too earneſtly, or love them too violently

or

or labour for them too diligently? When we know that if our prayers prevail not, and our labour ſucceeds not, we are undone for ever, I think it concerns us to ſeek and labour to the purpoſe. When it is put to the queſtion, Whether we ſhall live for ever in heaven or in hell? And the queſtion muſt be reſolved upon our obeying the goſpel, or diſobeying it, upon the painfulneſs or the ſlothfulneſs of our preſent endeavours; I think it is time for us to beſtir ourſelves, and to leave our trifling and complimenting with God.

2. Conſider, Our diligence ſhould be anſwerable to the greatneſs of the work which we have to do, as well as to the ends of it.

Now the works of a Chriſtian here are very many and very great. The ſoul muſt be renewed; many and great corruptions mortified; cuſtom, temptations, and worldly intereſt muſt be conquered; fleſh muſt be maſtered? Life, and friends, and credit, and all muſt be ſlighted; conſcience muſt be upon good grounds quieted; aſſurance of a pardon and ſalvation muſt be attained. And though it is God that muſt give us theſe, and that freely, without our own merits; yet will he not give them without our earneſt ſeeking and labour.

Beſides, there is a deal of knowledge to be got, for the guiding ourſelves, for defending the truth, for the direction of others, and a deal of ſkill for the right managing of our parts: many ordinances are to be uſed, and duties to be performed, ordinary, and extraordinary; every age, and year, and day, doth require freſh ſucceſſion of duty; every place we come in, every perſon we have to deal with, every change of our condition, doth ſtill require the renewing our labour, and bringing duty along with it: wives, children, ſervants, neighbours, friends, enemies, all of them call for duty from us: and all this of great importance too; ſo that for the moſt, if we miſcarry in it, it would prove our undoing.

Judge

Judge then yourſelves, whether men that have ſo much buſineſs lying upon their hands, ſhould not beſtir them? And whether it be their wiſdom either to delay, or to loiter?

3. Conſider, Our diligence ſhould be quickened, becauſe of the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of the time allotted us for the performing of all this work, and the many and great impediments which we meet with. Yet a few days, and we ſhall be here no more. Time paſſeth on: many diſeaſes are ready to aſſault us. We that now are preaching, and hearing, and talking, and walking, muſt very ſhortly be carried, and laid in the duſt, and there left to the worms in darkneſs and corruption: we are almoſt there already; it is but a few days, or months, or years, and what are theſe when once they are paſt? We know not whether we ſhall have another ſermon, or ſabbath, or hour. How then ſhould thoſe beſtir them for their Everlaſting Reſt, who know they have ſo ſhort a ſpace for ſo great a work? Beſides, every ſtep in the way hath its difficulties; *the gate is ſtrait and the way narrow: the righteous themſelves are ſcarcely ſaved.* Scandals and diſcouragements will be ſtill caſt before us; and can all theſe be overcome by ſlothful endeavours?

4. Moreover, Our diligence ſhould be anſwerable to the diligence of our enemies in ſeeking our deſtruction. For if we ſit ſtill while they are plotting and labouring; or if we be lazy in our defence, while they are diligent in aſſaulting us, you may eaſily conceive how we are likely to ſpeed. How diligent is Satan in all kind of temptations? Therefore, *Be ſober and vigilant, becauſe your adverſary, the devil as a roaring lion walketh about ſeeking whom he may devour.* How diligent are all the miniſters of *Satan?* Falſe teachers, ſcorners at godlineſs, malicious perſecutors, all unwearied; and our inward corruption the moſt buſy and diligent of all. Whatever we are about, it is ſtill reſiſting us; depraving our duties, perverting our thoughts, dulling our affections to good, exciting them to evil: and will a feeble reſiſtance ſerve our

our turn? Should we not be more active for our own preservation, than our enemies for our ruin?

5. Our affections and endeavours should bear some proportion with the talents we have received, and the means we have enjoyed.

It may well be expected that a horseman shall go faster than a footman; and he that hath a swift horse, faster than he that hath a slow one. More work will be expected from a sound man, than from the sick; and from a man at age, than from a child. And to whom men commit much, from them they will expect the more.

Now the talents which we have received are many and great; the means which we have enjoyed are very much, and very precious. What people breathing on earth, have had plainer instructions, or more forcible persuasions, or constant admonitions, in season and out of season? Sermons, till we have been weary of them: and sabbaths, till we profaned them? Excellent books in such plenty that we knew not which to read? What people have had God so near them, as we have had? Or have seen Christ, as it were, crucified before their eyes, as we have done? What people have had heaven and hell, as it were, opened unto them, as we have? Scarce a day wherein we have not had some spur to put us on. What speed then should such a people make for heaven? How should they fly that are thus winged? And how swiftly should they sail that have wind and tide to help them? Believe it, brethren, God looks for more from *England*, than from most nations in the world; and for more from you that enjoy these helps, than from the dark, untaught congregations of the land. A small measure of grace beseems not such a people; nor will an ordinary diligence in the work of God, excuse them.

6. The vigour of our affections and actions should be answerable to the great cost bestowed upon us, and to the deep engaging mercies which we

we have received from God. Surely we owe more ſervice to our Maſter, from whom we have our maintenance, than we do to a ſtranger, to whom we were never beholden.

O the coſt that God hath been at for our ſakes! The riches of ſea and land, of heaven and earth, hath he poured out unto us. All our lives have been filled up with mercies: we cannot look back upon one hour of it, or one paſſage in it, but we may behold mercy. We feed upon mercy, we wear mercy on our backs, we tread upon mercy; mercy within us, mercy without us, for this life, and for that to come. O the rare deliverances that we have partook of, both national and perſonal! How oft, how ſeaſonably, how fully, have our prayers been heard, and our fears removed? What large catalogues of particular mercies can every Chriſtian rehearſe? To offer to number them would be as endleſs a taſk, as to number the ſtars, or the ſands of the ſhore.

If there be any difference betwixt hell, (where we ſhould have been) and earth, (where we now are,) yea, or heaven, (which is offered to us,) then certainly we have received mercy. Yea, if the blood of the Son of God be mercy; then are we engaged to God by mercy; for ſo much did it coſt him to recover us to himſelf. And ſhould a people of ſuch deep engagements be lazy in their returns? Shall God think nothing too much nor too good for us; and ſhall we think all too much that we do for him? Thou art an obſerving, ſenſible man, who knoweſt how much thou art beholden to God, I appeal to thee, is it not a loitering performance of a few heartleſs duties, an unworthy requital of ſuch admirable kindneſs? For my own part, when I compare my ſlow and unprofitable life, with the frequent and wonderful mercies received, it ſhames me, it ſilenceth me, and leaves me inexcuſable.

7. Conſider, All the relations which we ſtand in toward God, call upon us for our utmoſt diligence. Should not the pot be wholly at the ſervice

ſervice of the potter? Are we his children, and do we not owe him our moſt tender affections, and dutiful obedience? Are we the ſpouſe of Chriſt, and do we not owe him our obſervance, and our love? *If he be our Father, where is his honour? And if he be our Maſter; where is his fear? We call him Lord and Maſter, and we do well:* but if our induſtry be not anſwerable to our relations, we condemn ourſelves in ſaying, we are his children, or his ſervants. How will the hard labour and daily toil that ſervants undergo to pleaſe their maſters, judge and condemn thoſe men who will not labour ſo hard for their great Maſter? Surely there are none who have a more honourable maſter than we, nor can expect ſuch fruit of their labours.

8. How cloſe ſhould they ply their work, who have ſuch attendants as we have? All the world are our ſervants, that we may be ſervants of God. The ſun, and moon, and ſtars, attend us with their light and influence; the earth, with all its furniture, is at our ſervice. How many thouſand plants and flowers, and fruits, and birds, and beaſts, do all attend us? The ſea, with its inhabitants, the air, the wind, the froſt and ſnow, the heat and fire, the clouds and rain, all wait upon us while we do our work; yea, *the angels are miniſtering ſpirits for us.* And is it not an intolerable crime for us to trifle, while all theſe are employed to aſſiſt us? Nay more; the patience of God doth wait upon us; the Lord Jeſus Chriſt waiteth, in the offers of his blood; the Holy Spirit waiteth, in ſtriving with our backward hearts; beſides, all his ſervants, the miniſters of his goſpel, who ſtudy and wait, and preach and wait, and pray and wait upon careleſs ſinners; and ſhall angels and men, yea the Lord himſelf, ſtand by and look on, while thou doſt nothing?

O Chriſtians, I beſeech you, whenever you are on your knees in prayer, or reproving the tranſgreſſors, or exhorting the obſtinate, or upon any duty, remember what attendants you have for

for this work; and then judge how it behoves you to perform it.

9. How forward and painful ſhould we be in that work, where we are ſure we can never do enough? If there were any danger in over-doing, then it might well cauſe men to moderate their endeavours; but we know, *That if we could do all, we were but unprofitable ſervants*; much more when we fail in all.

It is true, a man may poſſibly preach too much, or hear too much, (though I have known few that did ſo) but yet no man can obey or ſerve God too much, one duty may be ſaid to be too long, when it ſhuts out another; and then it ceaſeth indeed to be a duty. And all ſuperſtition, or worſhip of our own deviſing, may be called a righteouſneſs over-much; yet as long as you keep your ſervice to the rule of the word, you never need to fear *being righteous over-much*: or elſe we ſhould reproach the Lord and Lawgiver of the Church, as if he commanded us to do too much.

If the world were not mad with malice, they could never be ſo blinded in this point as they are: to think that diligence in Chriſt is folly and ſingularity; and that they who ſet themſelves wholly to ſeek eternal life, are but preciſe *Puritans!* The time is near, when they will eaſily confeſs, that God could not be loved or ſerved too much, and that no man can be too buſy to ſave his ſoul; for the world you may eaſily do too much, but herein (in God's way) you cannot.

10. Conſider, They that trifle in the way to heaven, loſe all their labour. If two be running in a race, he that runs ſloweſt, had as good never run at all; for he loſeth the prize, and his labour both. Many, who like *Agrippa, are but almoſt Chriſtians*, will find in the end they ſhall be but almoſt ſaved. God hath ſet the rate at which the pearl muſt be bought; if you bid a penny leſs, you had has good bid nothing. As a man that is lifting at ſome weighty things, if he put to almoſt ſtrength

ſtrength enough, it is as good he put to none at all, for he doth but loſe all his labour.

O how many profeſſors of Chriſtianity will find this true to their ſorrow, who have had a mind to the ways of God, and have kept up a dull taſk of duty, but never came to ſerious Chriſtianity? How many a duty have they loſt, for want of doing them thoroughly. *Many ſhall ſeek to enter, and not be able*; who, if they had ſtriven, might have been able. O therefore put to a little more diligence and ſtrength, that all be not in vain that you have done already!

11. Furthermore, We have loſt a great deal of time already, and therefore it is reaſon that we labour ſo much the harder. If a traveller ſleep, or trifle out moſt of the day, he muſt travel ſo much the faſter in the evening, or fall ſhort of his journey's end. With ſome of us our childhood and youth is gone; with ſome alſo their middle age, and the time before us is very uncertain. What a deal of time we have ſlept away, and talked away, and played away? What a deal have we ſpent in worldly thoughts and labours, or in mere idleneſs? Though in likelihood the moſt of our time is ſpent, yet how little of our work is done? And is it not time to beſtir ourſelves in the evening of our days? The time which we have loſt, can never be recalled; ſhould we not then redeem it by improving the little which remaineth? You may receive indeed an *equal recompence with thoſe that have borne the burthen and heat of the day, though you come not in till the laſt hour*: but then you muſt be ſure to labour diligently that hour. It is enough ſure, that we have loſt ſo much of our lives. Let us not now be ſo fooliſh as to loſe the reſt.

12. Conſider, the greater your layings-out are, the greater will be your comings-in. Though you may ſeem to loſe your labour at the preſent, yet the hour cometh when you ſhall find it with advantage. The ſeed which is buried and dead, will bring forth a plentiful increaſe at the harveſt.

Whatever

Whatever you do, and whatever you ſuffer, everlaſting Reſt will pay for all. There is no repentings of labours and ſufferings in heaven; none ſays, "Would I had ſpared my pains, and prayed leſs, or been leſs ſtrict, and did as the reſt of my neighbours did:" there is no ſuch a thought in heaven as this. But on the contrary, it will be their joy to look back upon their labours, and conſider how the mighty power of God did bring them through all. Who ever complained that he came to heaven at too dear a rate: or that his ſalvation coſt him more labour than it was worth? We may ſay of all our labour, as *Paul* of his ſufferings, *I reckon that the ſufferings* (and labours) *of this preſent time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that ſhall be revealed.* We labour but for a moment, but we ſhall reſt for ever. Who would not put forth all his ſtrength for one hour, when he may be a prince while he lives?

Oh, what is the duty and ſuffering for a ſhort life, in reſpect of endleſs joys with God? Will not *all our tears be then wiped away?* and all the ſorrows of our duties forgotten? But yet the Lord will not forget them: *for he is not unjuſt to forget our work and labour of love.*

13. Conſider, violence and laborious ſtriving for ſalvation, is the way that the wiſdom of God hath directed us to, as beſt, and his ſovereign authority appointed us, as neceſſary. Who knows the way to heaven better than the God of heaven? When men tell us that we are too ſtrict, whom do they accuſe, God or us? If we do no more than what we are commanded, nor ſo much neither; they may as well ſay, God hath made laws which are too ſtrict. Sure, if it were a fault, it would lie in him that commands, and not in us who obey. And dare theſe men think that they are wiſer than God. What do they leſs, when God bids us take the moſt diligent courſe, and they tell us, it is more ado than needs? Mark well the language of God, and ſee how you can reconcile it with the language of the world: "The kingdom of heaven

heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate; for many ſhall ſeek to enter in, and not be able. Whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the grave, whither thou goeſt. Work out your ſalvation with fear and trembling. Give diligence to make your calling and election ſure. If the righteous be ſcarcely ſaved, where ſhall the ungodly and ſinner appear?

This is the conſtant language of Chriſt; and which ſhall I follow, God or men: yea, and that the worſt and moſt wicked men? Shall I think that very ignorant, worldly ſot, that can only call a man a *Puritan*, knows more than Chriſt, or can tell God how to mend the ſcriptures? Let them bring all the ſeeming reaſon they can againſt the holy, violent ſtriving of the ſaints; and this ſufficeth me to confute them all, that God is of another mind, and he hath commanded me to do much more than I do: and though I could ſee no reaſon for it, yet his will is reaſon enough to me: I am ſure God is worthy to govern us, if we were better than we are. Who ſhould make laws for us, but he that made us? And who ſhould mark out the way to heaven, but he that muſt bring us thither? And who ſhould determine on what conditions we ſhall be ſaved, but he that beſtows the gift of ſalvation? So that let the world, or the fleſh, or the devil, ſpeak againſt a holy laborious courſe, this is my anſwer, God hath commanded it.

14. Moreover, It is a courſe that all men in the world either do, or will approve of. There is not a man that ever was, or is, or ſhall be, but ſhall one day juſtify the diligence of the ſaints. And who would not go that way which every man ſhall applaud?

It is true, it is now *a way every where ſpoken againſt and hated*; but let me tell you, 1. Moſt that ſpeak againſt it, in their judgments approve of it; only becauſe the practice of godlineſs is againſt

againſt the pleaſures of the fleſh, therefore do they againſt their own judgments, reſiſt it. They have not one word of reaſon againſt it, but reproaches and railing are their beſt arguments. 2. Thoſe that are now againſt it, whether in judgment or paſſion, will ſhortly be of another mind. If they come to heaven, their minds muſt be changed before they come there. If they go to hell, their judgment will then be altered, whether they will or no.

If you could ſpeak with every ſoul that ſuffereth thoſe torments, and aſk, whether it be poſſible to be too diligent and ſerious in ſeeking ſalvation? you may eaſily conjecture what anſwer they would return. Take the moſt bitter derider or perſecutor of Godlineſs, even thoſe that will venture their lives to overthrow it, if thoſe men do not ſhortly wiſh a thouſand times that they had been the moſt holy, diligent chriſtians on earth, then let me bear the ſhame of a falſe prophet for ever.

Remember this, you that will be of the opinion and way that moſt are of: why will you not be of the opinion then that all will be ſhortly of? Why will you be of the judgment which you are ſure you ſhall all ſhortly change? O that you were but as wiſe in this, as thoſe in hell!

15. Conſider, They that have made the moſt ſerious, painful chriſtians, when they come to die, exceedingly lament their negligence. Thoſe that have wholly addicted themſelves to the work of God, and have made it the buſineſs of their lives, and have ſlighted the world, and mortified the fleſh, and have been the wonders of the world for their heavenly converſation; yet when conſcience is deeply awakened, how do their failings wound them? Even thoſe that are hated and derided by the world for being ſo ſtrict, and are thought to be almoſt beſide themſelves, for their extraordinary diligence; yet commonly when they lie dying, wiſh, O that they had been a thouſand times more holy, more heavenly, more laborious

laborious for their ſouls? What a caſe then will the negligent world be in, when their conſciences are awakened, when they lie dying, and look behind them upon a lazy, negligent life; and look before them upon a ſevere and terrible judgment? What an eſteem will they have for a holy life! For my own part, I may ſay as *Eraſmus*, "They accuſe me for doing too much, but my own conſcience accuſeth me for doing too little, and being too ſlow: and it is far eaſier bearing the ſcorns of the world than the ſcourges of conſcience." The world ſpeaks at a diſtance without me, ſo that though I hear their words, I can chuſe whether I will feel them. But my conſcience ſpeaks within, at the very heart, ſo that every check doth pierce me to the quick. Conſcience, when it reprehends juſtly, is the meſſenger of God: ungodly revilers are the voice of the devil. I had rather be reproached by the devil for ſeeking ſalvation, than reproved of God for neglecting it: I had rather the world ſhould call me Puritan in the devil's name, than conſcience ſhould call Loiterer in God's name. As God and conſcience are more uſeful friends than Satan and the world: ſo are they more dreadful, irreſiſtible enemies.

And thus, reader, I have ſhewn thee ſufficient reaſons againſt thy ſlothfulneſs and negligence, if thou be not a man reſolved to ſhut thine eyes, and to deſtroy thyſelf. Yet, leſt all this ſhould not prevail, I will add ſomewhat more to perſuade thee to be ſerious in thy endeavours for heaven.

1. Conſider, God is in good earneſt with you; and why then ſhould you not be ſo with him? In his commands, he means as he ſpeaks, and will verily require your real obedience. In his threatenings, he is ſerious, and will make them all good againſt the rebellious. In his promiſes he is ſerious, and will fulfil them to the obedient, even to the leaſt tittle. In his judgments he is ſerious, as he will make his enemies know to their terror. Was not God in good earneſt when he drowned the world, when he conſumed *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*,

when he ſcattered the Jews? And very ſhortly he will lay hold on his enemies, particularly, man by man; and make them know that he is in good earneſt: eſpecially when it comes to the great reckoning day. And is it a time then for us to dally with God?

2. Jeſus Chriſt was ſerious in purchaſing our redemption. He was ſerious in teaching, *when he neglected his meat and drink*, John iv. 32. He was ſerious in praying, *when he continued all night at it.* He was ſerious in doing good, *when his kindred came and laid hands on him, thinking he had been beſide himſelf.* He was ſerious in ſuffering, *when he faſted forty days, was tempted, betrayed, ſpit on, buffeted, crowned with thorns, ſweat blood, was crucified, pierced, died.* There was no jeſting in all this: and ſhould we not be ſerious in ſeeking our own ſalvation?

3. The Holy Ghoſt is ſerious in ſoliciting us for our happineſs; his motions are frequently preſſing, and importunate; he ſtriveth with our hearts: he is grieved when we reſiſt him. And ſhould we not then be ſerious in obeying his motions, and yielding to his ſuit?

4. How ſerious and diligent are all the creatures in their ſervice to thee? What haſte makes the ſun to compaſs the world? And how truly doth it return at its appointed hour. So do the moon and other planets. The ſprings are always flowing for thy uſe; the rivers ſtill running; the ſpring and harveſt keep their times. How hard doth thy ox labour for thee from day to day? How painfully and ſpeedily doth thy horſe bear thee in travel? And ſhall all theſe be laborious, and thou only negligent? Shall they all be ſo ſerious in ſerving thee, and yet thou be ſo ſlight in thy ſervice to God?

5. Conſider the ſervants of the world and the devil are ſerious and diligent; they ply their work continually, as if they could never do enough: they make haſte, and march furiouſly, as if they were afraid of coming to hell too late: they bear

down

down miniſters, and ſermons, and counſel; and all before them. And ſhalt thou do more for the devil, than thou wilt do for God? Or be more diligent for damnation, than thou wilt be for ſalvation? Haſt not thou a better Maſter? And ſweeter employment? And ſweeter encouragement? And a better reward?

6. There is no jeſting in heaven, nor in hell. The Saints have a real happineſs, and the damned a real miſery; the Saints are ſerious and high in their joy and praiſe; and the damned are ſerious and deep in their ſorrow and complaints. There are no remiſs or ſleepy praiſes in heaven; nor any remiſs or ſleepy lamentations in hell: all men there are in good earneſt. And ſhould we not then be ſerious now? I dare promiſe thee, the thoughts of theſe things will ſhortly be ſerious thoughts with thyſelf. When thou comeſt to death or judgment, O what deep heart-piercing thoughts wilt thou have of eternity! Methinks I foreſee thee already aſtoniſhed, to think how thou couldſt poſſibly make ſo light of theſe things! Methinks I even hear thee crying out of thy ſtupidity and madneſs.

And now having laid thee down theſe undeniable arguments, I do, in the name of God, demand thy reſolution; what ſayeſt thou, wilt thou yield obedience or not? I am confident thy conſcience is convinced of thy duty. Dareſt thou now go on in thy common careleſs courſe, againſt the plain evidence of reaſon and commands of God, and againſt the light of thy own conſcience? Dareſt thou live as looſely, and ſin as boldly, and pray as ſeldom and as coldly as before? Dareſt thou now as carnally ſpend the ſabbath, and ſlumber over the ſervice of God as ſlightly, and think of thine everlaſting ſtate as careleſsly as before? Or doſt thou not rather reſolve to gird up the loins of thy mind, and to ſet thyſelf wholly about the work of thy ſalvation; and to do it with all thy might; and to break over all the oppoſitions of the world; and to ſlight all their ſcorns and perſecutions: *To caſt*

off the weight that hangeth on thee, and the ſin that doth ſo eaſily beſet thee; and to run with patience and ſpeed the race that is ſet before thee? I hope theſe are thy full reſolutions: if thou art well in thy wits, I am ſure they are.

Yet becauſe I know the ſtrange obſtinacy of the heart of man, and becauſe I would fain leave theſe perſuaſions faſtened in thy heart, that ſo, if it be poſſible, thou mighteſt be awakened to thy duty, and thy ſoul might live; I ſhall proceed with thee yet a little further. And I once more entreat thee to ſtir up thy attention, and go along with me in the free and ſober uſe of thy reaſon, while I propound theſe following queſtions: and I command thee from God, that thou reſiſt not conviction, but anſwer them faithfully, and obey accordingly.

Queſt. 1. If you could grow rich by religion, or get lands and lordſhips thereby; or if you could be recovered from ſickneſs by it, or could live for ever in proſperity on earth; what kind of lives would you then lead, and what pains would you take in the ſervice of God? And is not the Reſt of the Saints a more excellent happineſs than all this?

Queſt. 2. If the law of the land did puniſh every breach of the ſabbath, or every omiſſion of family duties, or ſecret duties, or every cold and heartleſs prayer, with death. If it were felony or treaſon to be negligent in worſhip, and looſe in your lives; what manner of perſons would you then be? And what lives would you lead? And is not eternal death more terrible than temporal?

Queſt. 3. If it were God's ordinary courſe to puniſh every ſin with ſome preſent judgment, ſo that every time a man ſwears, or is drunk, or ſpeaks a lie, or backbiteth his neighbour, he ſhould be ſtruck dead, or blind, or lame in the place. If God did puniſh every cold prayer, or neglect of duty with ſome remarkable plague; what manner of perſons would you be? If you ſhould ſuddenly fall down dead like *Ananias* and

Sapphira with the ſin in your hands; or the plague of God ſhould ſeize upon you as upon the *Iſraelites*, while their ſweet morſels were yet in their mouths. If but a mark ſhould be ſet in the forehead of every one that neglected a duty or committed a ſin: what kind of lives would you then lead? And is not eternal wrath more terrible than this?

Queſt. 4. If you had ſeen the general diſſolution of the world, and all the pomp and glory of it conſumed to aſhes: if you ſaw all on a fire about you, ſumptuous buildings, cities, kingdoms, land, water, earth, heaven, all flaming about your ears: if you had ſeen all that men laboured for, and ſold their ſouls for, gone: friends gone: the place of your former abode gone: the hiſtory ended, and all come down, what would ſuch a ſight as this perſuade you to do? Why, ſuch a ſight thou ſhalt certainly ſee, I put my queſtion to thee in the words of the Apoſtle, 2. Pet. iii. *Seeing all theſe things ſhall be diſſolved, what manner of perſons ought you to be in all holy converſation and godlineſs, looking for, and haſting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire ſhall be diſſolved, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat?* As if we ſhould ſay, We cannot poſſibly conceive or expreſs what manner of perſons we ſhould be in all holineſs and godlineſs, when we do but think of the ſudden and certain, and terrible diſſolution of all things below.

Queſt. 5. What if you had ſeen the proceſs of the judgment of the great day? If you had ſeen the wicked ſtand trembling on the left hand of the Judge, and *Chriſt* himſelf accuſing them of their rebellions and neglects, and remembering them of all their former ſlightings of his grace, and at laſt condemning them to perpetual perdition? If you had ſeen the godly ſtanding on the right hand, and Jeſus Chriſt acknowledging their faithful obedience and adjudging them to the poſſeſſion of the joy of their Lord? What manner of perſons would you have been after ſuch a ſight as this?

Why, this sight thou shalt one day see, as sure as thou livest. And why then should not the foreknowledge of such a day awake thee to thy duty?

Quest. 6. What if you had once seen hell open, and all the damned there in their ceaseless torments, and had heard them crying out of their slothfulness in the day of their visitation, and wishing that they had but another life to live, and that God would but try them once again? One crying out of his neglect of duty, and another of his loitering and trifling, when he should have been labouring for his life? What manner of persons would you have been after such a sight as this? What if you had seen heaven opened, as *Stephen* did, and all the Saints there triumphing in glory, and enjoying the end of their labours and sufferings? What a life would you live after such a sight as this? Why, you will see this with your eyes before it be long.

Quest. 7. What if you had been in hell but one year, or one day, or hour, and there felt those torments that now you do but hear? And God should turn you into the world again, and try you with another life-time, and say, I will see whether thou wilt be yet any better: what manner of persons would you be? If you were to live a thousand years, would you not live as strictly as the preciscst Saints, and spend all those years in prayer and duty, so you might but escape the torment which you suffered? How seriously then would you speak of hell! And pray against it! And hear, and read, and watch, and obey! How earnestly would you admonish the careless to take heed, and look about them to prevent their ruin! And will not you take God's word for the truth of this, except you feel it? Is it not your wisdom to spend this life in labouring for heaven, while ye have it, rather than to lie in torment, wishing for more time in vain.

And thus I have said enough, if not to stir up the lazy sinner to a serious working out his salvation, yet at least to silence him, and leave him inexcusable

excuſable at the judgment of God. If thou canſt, after reading all this, go on in the ſame neglect of God, and thy ſoul, and draw out the reſt of thy life in the ſame dull and careleſs courſe as thou haſt hitherto done; and if thou haſt ſo far ſtupified thy conſcience, that it will quietly ſuffer thee to forget all this, and to trifle out the reſt of thy time in the buſineſs of the world, when in the mean while thy ſalvation is in danger, and the Judge is at the door; I have then no more to ſay to thee: it is as good ſpeaking to a rock. Only as we do by our friends when they are dead, and our words and actions can do them no good, yet to teſtify our affections, we weep and mourn for them; ſo will I alſo do for theſe ſouls. It makes my heart even tremble to think how they will ſtand trembling before the Lord! And how confounded and ſpeechleſs they will be, when *Chriſt* ſhall reaſon with them concerning their negligence and ſloth! When he ſhall ſay, as in Jer. ii. 5. 9. 11. 15. *What iniquity have your Fathers* (or you) *found in me, that ye are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity?* Did I ever wrong you, or do you any harm, or ever diſcourage you from following my ſervice? Was my way ſo bad that you could not endure it? Or my ſervice ſo baſe that you could not ſtoop to it? Did I ſtoop to the fulfilling of the law to you, and could not you ſtoop to fulfil the eaſy conditions of my goſpel? Was the world or Satan a better friend to you than I? Or had they done for you more than I had done? Try now whether they will ſave you, or whether they will recompenſe you for the loſs of heaven; or whether they will be as good to you as I would have been: O: what will the wretched ſinner anſwer for any of this? But though man will not hear, yet we may hope in ſpeaking to God—Lord ſmite theſe rocks till they guſh forth waters: though theſe ears are deaf, ſay to them, *Ephphatha*, be opened: though theſe ſinners be dead, let that power ſpeak, which ſome time ſaid, *Lazarus ariſe!* We know they will be

awakened at the laſt reſurrection: O, but then it will be only to their ſorrow. O thou that didſt weep and groan over dead Lazarus, pity theſe ſad and ſenſeleſs ſouls, till they are able to weep, and groan for, and pity themſelves. As thou haſt bid thy ſervant ſpeak, ſo ſpeak now thyſelf; they will hear thy voice ſpeaking to their ears. Long haſt thou knocked at theſe hearts in vain, now break the doors, and enter in.

Yet I will add a few more words to good men in particular, to ſhew them why they above all men ſhould be laborious for heaven; and that there is a great deal of reaſon, that though all the world ſit ſtill, yet they ſhould abhor that lazineſs and negligence, and lay out all their ſtrength on the work of God. To this end, I deſire them alſo to anſwer ſoberly to theſe few queſtions.

Queſt. 1. What manner of perſons ſhould thoſe be, who have felt the ſmart of their negligence, in the new-birth, in their ſeveral wounds and trouble of conſcience, in their doubts and fears, in their various afflictions: they that have groaned and cried out ſo oft, under the ſenſe and effects of their negligence, and are like enough to feel it again, if they do not reform it, ſure one would think they ſhould be ſlothful no more.

Queſt. 2. What manner of perſons ſhould thoſe be who have bound themſelves to God by ſo many covenants as we have done, and in ſpecial have covenanted ſo oft to be more painful and faithful in his ſervice? At every ſacrament; on many days of humiliation and thankſgiving; in moſt of our deep diſtreſſes and dangerous ſickneſſes; we are ſtill ready to bewail our neglects, and to engage ourſelves, if God will but try us, and truſt one again, how diligent and laborious we will be, and now we will improve our time, and reprove offenders, and watch over ourſelves, and ply our work; and do him more ſervice in a day, than we did in a month: the Lord pardon our perfidious covenant-breaking; and grant that our engagements may not condemn us.

Queſt.

Queſt. 3. What manner of men ſhould they be in duty, who have received ſo much encouragement, as we have done? Who have taſted ſuch ſweetneſs in diligent obedience, as doth much more than countervail all the pains; who have ſo oft had experience of the wide difference between lazy and laborious duty, by their different iſſues; who have found all our lazy duties unfruitful; and all our ſtrivings and wreſtlings with God ſucceſsful, ſo that we were never importunate with God in vain. We who have had ſo many deliverances upon urgent ſeeking; and have received almoſt all our ſolid comforts in a way of cloſe and conſtant duty: how ſhould we above all men ply our work?

Queſt. 4. What manner of perſons ſhould they be in holineſs, who have ſo much of the great work yet undone? So many ſins in ſo great ſtrength; graces weak, ſanctification imperfect, corruption ſtill working, and taking advantage of all our omiſſion. When we are as a boat-man on the water; let him row never ſo hard a month together, if he do but ſlack his hand, and think to eaſe himſelf, his boat goes faſter down the ſtream than before it went up: ſo do our ſouls, when we think to eaſe ourſelves by abating our pains in duty. Our time is ſhort: our enemies mighty: our hindrances many: God ſeems yet at a diſtance from many of us: our thoughts of him are dull and unbelieving: our acquaintance and communion with Chriſt is ſmall: and our deſires to be with him are as ſmall. And ſhould men in our caſe ſtand ſtill?

Queſt. 5. Laſtly, What manner of perſons ſhould they be, on whom the glory of the great God doth ſo much depend? Men will judge of the father by the children, and of the maſter by the ſervants. We bear his image, and therefore men will meaſure him by his repreſentation. He is no where in the world ſo lively repreſented, as in his ſaints: and ſhall they ſet him forth as a pattern of idleneſs? All the world is not capable of honouring

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or diſhonouring God ſo much as we: and the leaſt of his honour is of more worth than all our lives. Seeing then that all theſe things are ſo, I charge thee who art a chriſtian, in my maſter's name, to conſider, and reſolve the queſtion, *What manner of perſons ought we to be in all holy converſation and godlineſs?* And let thy life anſwer the queſtion as well as thy tongue.

I have been larger upon this uſe, partly becauſe of the general neglect of heaven, that all ſorts are guilty of; partly becauſe men's ſalvation depends upon their preſent ſtriving and ſeeking; partly becauſe the doctrine of free-grace miſunderſtood, is lately ſo abuſed to the cheriſhing of ſloth and ſecurity: partly becauſe many eminent men of late do judge, that to work or labour for life and ſalvation is mercenary, legal, and dangerous; which doctrine (as I have ſaid before) were it by the owners reduced into practice, would undoubtedly damn them; becauſe they that ſeek not, ſhall not find; and they that ſtrive not to enter, ſhall be ſhut out; and they that labour not, ſhall not be crowned: and partly becauſe it is grown the cuſtom, inſtead of ſtriving for the kingdom, and contending for the faith, to ſtrive with each other about uncertain controverſies and to contend about the circumſtancials of the faith; wherein the kingdom of God doth no more conſiſt than in meats or drinks, or genealogies. Sirs, ſhall we who are brethren fall out by the way home, and ſpend ſo much of our time about the ſmaller matters which thouſands have been ſaved without, but never any one ſaved by them, while Chriſt and our eternal Reſt are almoſt forgotten? The Lord pardon and heal the folly of his people.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

The third Uſe. Perſuading all Men to try their Title to this Reſt; and directing them how to try, that they may know.

I Now proceed to the third uſe; and becauſe it is of very great importance, I intreat thee to weigh it the more ſeriouſly.

Is there ſuch a glorious Reſt ſo near at hand? And ſhall none enjoy it but the people of God? What mean the moſt of the world then, to live ſo contentedly without the aſſurance of their intereſt in this Reſt? and to neglect the trying of their title to it, when the Lord hath ſo fully opened the bleſſedneſs of that kingdom, which none but obedient believers ſhall poſſeſs, and ſo fully expreſt thoſe torments which all the reſt of the world muſt eternally ſuffer? A man would think now, that they who believe this ſhould never be at any quiet till they were heirs of the kingdom. Moſt men ſay, they believe this word of God to be true: how then can they ſit ſtill in ſuch an utter uncertainty, whether ever they ſhall live in Reſt or not? Lord what a wonderful madneſs is this, that men who know they muſt preſently enter upon unchangeable joy or pain, ſhould yet live as uncertain what ſhould be their doom, as if they had never heard of any ſuch ſtate; yea, and live as quietly and as merrily in this uncertainty, as if nothing ailed them, and there were no danger? Are theſe men alive or dead? Are they walking, or aſleep? What do they think on? Where are their hearts? If they have but a weighty ſuit at law, how careful are they to know whether it will go with them, or againſt them? If they were to be tried for their lives, how careful would they be to know whether they ſhould be ſaved or condemned, eſpecially if their care might ſurely ſave them? If they be dangerouſly ſick, they will enquire of the phyſician; what think you, Sir, ſhall

I eſcape or no? But for the buſineſs of their ſalvation, they are content to be uncertain. If you aſk moſt men a reaſon of their hope to be ſaved, they will ſay, it is becauſe God is merciful, and Chriſt died for ſinners, and the like general reaſons, which any man in the world may give as well as they: but put them to prove their intereſt in Chriſt, and the ſaving mercy of God, and they can ſay nothing at all, at leaſt nothing out of their hearts and experience.

If God ſhould aſk them for their ſouls, as he did *Cain* for his brother *Abel*, they could return but ſuch an anſwer as he did? If God or man ſhould ſay to them, What caſe is thy ſoul in, man? Is it in a ſtate of life, or a ſtate of death? He would be ready to ſay, I know not; am I my ſoul's keeper? I hope well; I truſt God with my ſoul, I ſhall ſpeed as well as other men do, I thank God I never made any doubt of my ſalvation. Thou haſt the more cauſe to doubt a great deal, becauſe thou never didſt doubt; and yet more becauſe thou haſt been ſo careleſs in thy confidence. What do theſe expreſſions diſcover, but a wilful neglect of thy own ſalvation? As a ſhipmaſter that ſhould let his veſſel alone, and ſay, I will venture it among the rocks, and the waves, and winds; I will truſt God with it; it will ſpeed as well as other veſſels do. Indeed as well as other mens that are diligent and watchful. What horrible abuſe of God is this, for men to pretend they truſt God, to cloak their own wilful negligence! If thou didſt truly truſt God, thou wouldeſt alſo be ruled by him, and truſt him in that way which he hath appointed thee. He requires thee to *give all diligence to make thy calling and election ſure*, and ſo to truſt him, 1 Pet. i. 10. He hath marked thee out a way by which thou mayſt come to be ſure; and charged thee to ſearch and try thyſelf, till thou certainly know. Were he not a fooliſh traveller, that would go on when he doth not know whether it be right or wrong; and ſay I hope I am right; I will go on and truſt God?

God? Art not thou guilty of this folly in thy travels to eternity? Not conſidering that a little ſerious enquiry whether the way be right, might ſave thee a great deal of labour which thou beſtoweſt in vain, and muſt undo again, or elſe thou wilt miſs of ſalvation, and undo thyſelf. Did I not know what a deſperate, blind, carnal heart is, I ſhould wonder how thou doſt to keep off continual terrors from thy heart: and eſpecially in theſe caſes following:

1. I wonder how thou canſt either think or ſpeak of the dreadful God without exceeding terror and aſtoniſhment, as long as thou art uncertain whether he be thy father or thy enemy, and knoweſt not but all his attributes may be employed againſt thee. If his *Saints muſt rejoice before him with trembling, and ſerve him with fear*: if they that are ſure to receive the immoveable kingdom, muſt yet ſerve God *with reverence and godly fear*, becauſe He *is a conſuming fire:* how terrible ſhould the remembrance of him be to them that know not but this fire may for ever conſume them?

2. How doſt thou think, without trembling, upon Jeſus Chriſt? When thou knoweſt not whether his blood hath purged thy ſoul? And whether he will condemn thee, or acquit thee in judgment; nor whether he be the corner-ſtone and foundation of thy happineſs, or a ſtone of ſtumbling to break thee, and grind thee to powder?

3. How canſt thou open the Bible, and read a chapter, or hear a chapter read, without being terrified? Methinks every leaf ſhould be to thee as *Belſhazzar*'s writing on the wall, except only that which draws thee to try and reform: if thou read the promiſes, thou knoweſt not whether ever they ſhall be fulfilled in thee, becauſe thou art uncertain of thy performance of the condition. If thou read the threatenings, for any thing thou knoweſt, thou doſt read thy own ſentence. I do not wonder if thou art an enemy to plain preaching,

ing, and if thou ſay of it, and of the miniſter and ſcripture itſelf, as *Ahab* of the prophet, *I hate him, for he doth not propheſy good concerning me, but evil.*

4. What comfort canſt thou find in any thing which thou poſſeſſeſt? Methinks, friends, and honours, and houſes and lands, ſhould do thee little good, till thou know thou haſt the love of God withal, and ſhall have Reſt with him when thou leaveſt theſe. Offer to a priſoner before he knows his ſentence, either muſic, or lands, or preferment, and what cares he for any of theſe, till he know how he ſhall eſcape for his life? Then he will look after theſe comforts of life, and not before? for he knows if he muſt die the next day it will be ſmall comfort to die rich or honourable. Even when thou lieſt down to take thy reſt, methinks the uncertainty of thy ſalvation ſhould keep thee waking or amaze thee in thy dreams and trouble thy ſleep; and thou ſhouldſt ſay, as *Job* in a ſmaller diſtreſs than thine, Job vii. 13. 14. *When I ſay, my bed ſhall comfort me, my couch ſhall eaſe my complaint, then thou ſtareſt me through dreams, and terrifieſt me through viſions.*

5. What ſhift doſt thou make to think of thy dying hour? Thou knoweſt it is hard by, and there is no avoiding it, nor any medicine found out that can prevent it; thou knoweſt it is the *king of terror*, and the inlet to thine unchangeable ſtate. If thou ſhouldſt die this day, (and *who knows what a day may bring forth?*) thou doſt not know whether thou ſhalt go ſtraight to heaven or hell? and canſt thou be merry till thou art got out of this dangerous ſtate?

6. What ſhift doſt thou make to preſerve thy heart from horror, when thou remembereſt the great judgment day, and the everlaſting flames? Doſt thou not tremble as *Felix* when thou heareſt of it? and as the elders of the town trembled when *Samuel* came to it, ſaying *Comeſt thou peaceably?* So methinks thou ſhouldſt do when the miniſter comes into the pulpit: and thy heart, whenever thou meditateſt of that day, ſhould meditate terror,

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and thou ſhouldſt even be a terror to thyſelf and all thy friends. If the keepers trembled, and became as dead men, when they did but ſee the angels, Matt. xxviii. 3, 4. How canſt thou think of living in hell with devils, till thou haſt got ſome ſound aſſurance that thou ſhalt eſcape it? Or if thou ſeldom think of thoſe things, the wonder is as great, what ſhift thou makeſt to keep thoſe thoughts from thy heart? Thy bed is very ſoft, or thy heart is very hard, if thou canſt ſleep ſoundly in this uncertain caſe.

I have ſhewed thee the danger; let me next proceed to ſhew thee the remedy.

If this general uncertainty of the world, about their ſalvation, were remedileſs, then muſt it be borne as other unavoidable miſeries: but alas, the common cauſe is wilfulneſs and negligence: men will not be perſuaded to uſe the remedy, though it be at hand, preſcribed to them by God himſelf, and all neceſſary helps thereunto provided for them. The great means to conquer this uncertainty, is ſelf-examination, or the ſerious and diligent trying of a man's heart and ſtate by the rule of Scripture. But alas, either men underſtand not the nature and uſe of this duty, or elſe they will not be at the pains to try. Go through a congregation of a thouſand men, and how few of them will you meet with, that ever beſtowed one hour in all their lives in a cloſe examination of their title to heaven? Aſk thy own conſcience, reader, when was the time, and where was the place, that ever thou ſolemnly tookeſt thy heart to taſk, as in the ſight of God, and examinedſt it by Scripture, whether it be born again or not? Whether it be holy or not? Whether it be ſet moſt on God or on creatures, on heaven or earth; and didſt follow on this examination, till thou hadſt diſcovered thy condition, and ſo paſt ſentence on thyſelf accordingly?

But becauſe this is a work of ſo high concernment, and ſo commonly neglected, I will therefore,

1. Shew

1. Shew you, That it is poſſible by trying to come to a certainty.

2. Shew you the hindrances that keep men from trying, and from aſſurance.

3. I will lay down ſome motives to perſuade you to it.

4. I will give you ſome directions how to perform it.

5. And laſtly, I will lay you down ſome marks out of Scripture, by which you may try, and come to an infallible certainty, whether you are the people of God or no.

And 1. I ſhall ſhew you that certainty of ſalvation may be attained, and ought to be laboured for. Which I maintain by theſe arguments,

1. Scripture tells us we may know, and that the Saints before us have known their juſtification, and future ſalvation, 2 Cor. v. 1. Rom. viii. 36. John xxi. 15. 1 John v. 19. and iv. 13. and iii. 14. 24. and ii. 3, 5. Rom. viii. 14. 19. 36. Eph. iii. 12. I refer you to the places for brevity.

2. If we may be certain of the premiſes, then may we alſo be certain of the concluſion. But here we may be certain of both the premiſes. For 1. That "whoſoever believeth in Chriſt ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting life," is the voice of the goſpel; and therefore, That we may be ſure of: that we are ſuch believers, may be known by conſcience and internal ſenſe.

3. The Scripture would never make ſuch a wide difference between the children of God and the children of the devil, and ſet forth the happineſs of the one, and the miſery of the other, and make this difference to run through all the veins of its doctrine, if a man cannot know which of theſe two ſtates he is in.

4. Much leſs would the Holy Ghoſt bid us, *Give all diligence to make our calling and election ſure*, if it could not be done, 2 Pet. i. 10.

5. And to what purpoſe ſhould we be ſo earneſtly urged to examine, and prove, and try ourſelves, whether we be in the faith, and whether

whether Chriſt be in us, or we be reprobates: 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Why ſhould we ſearch for that which cannot be found?

6. How can we obey thoſe precepts which require us to rejoice always? 1 Theſſ. v. 16. to call God our Father, Luke xi. 13. to live in his praiſes, Pſalm xlix. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and to long for Chriſt's coming, Rev. xxii. 17, 20. 2 Theſſ. i. 10. and to comfort ourſelves with the mention of it, 1 Theſſ. iv. 18. which are all the conſequences of aſſurance? Who can do any of theſe heartily, that is not in ſome meaſure ſure that he is a child of God?

The ſecond thing I promiſed, is, to ſhew you what are the hindrances which keep men from examination and aſſurance. I ſhall, 1. Shew what hindereth them from trying; and, 2. What hindereth them from knowing when they do try, that ſo when you ſee the impediments, you may avoid them.

And, 2. We cannot doubt but Satan will do his part, to hinder us from ſuch a neceſſary duty as this; if all the powers he hath can do it, or all the means and inſtruments which he can raiſe up. He is loth the godly ſhould have that aſſurance, and advantage againſt corruption, which faithful ſelf-examination would procure them; and for the ungodly he knows, if they ſhould once fall cloſe to this they would find out his deceits and their own danger. If they did but faithfully perform this duty, he were likely to loſe moſt of his ſubjects. If the ſnare be not hid, the bird will eſcape it: Satan knows how to angle for ſouls, better than to ſhew them the hook or line, and to fright them away with a noiſe, or with his own appearance.

Therefore he labours to keep them from a ſearching miniſtry; or to keep the miniſter from helping them to ſearch: or to take off the edge of the word, that it may not pierce, or to turn away their thoughts, or poſſeſs them with prejudice: Satan is acquainted with all the preparations of the miniſter, he knows when he hath provided a

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searching sermon, fitted to the state and necessity of a hearer; and therefore he will keep him away that day, if it be possible, or else cast him asleep, or steal away the word by the cares and talk of the world, or some way prevent its operation.

This is the first hindrance.

Wicked men are also great impediments to poor sinners when they should examine and discover their estates.

1. Their examples hinder much. When any ignorant sinner seeth all his friends and neighbours do as he doth, yea, the rich and learned as well as others, this is an exceeding great temptation to proceed in his security.

2. The merry company, and discourse of these men do take away the thoughts of his spiritual state, and make the understanding drunk: so that if the Spirit had before put them into any jealousy of themselves, or any purpose to try themselves, these do soon quench them all.

3. Also their continual discourse of matters of the world, doth damp all these purposes.

4. Their railings also, and scorning at godly persons, is a very great impediment to multitudes of souls, and possesseth them with such a prejudice and dislike of the way to heaven, that they settle in the way they are in.

5. Their constant persuasions, allurements, and threats, hinder much. God doth scarce ever open the eyes of a poor sinner, to see that his way is wrong, but presently there is a multitude of Satan's apostles ready to flatter him, to daub, and deceive, and settle him again in the quiet possession of his former master. What, say they, do you make a doubt of your salvation, who have lived so well, and done nobody harm? God is merciful: and if such as you shall not be saved, God help a great many! What do you think is become of all your forefathers? And what will become of all your friends and neighbours that live as you do? Will they all be damned? Shall none be saved, think you, but a few strict ones? Come, come, if ye

ye hearken to theſe books or preachers, they will drive you to deſpair, or drive you out of your wits. Thus do they follow the ſoul that is eſcaping from Satan, with reſtleſs cries till they have brought him back: Oh, how many thouſands have ſuch charms kept aſleep in ſecurity, till death and hell have awakened and better informed them! The Lord calls to the ſinner, and tells him, "The gate is ſtrait, the way narrow, and few find it: —try, and examine whether thou be in the faith or no; give all diligence to make ſure in time!"—And the world cries out clean the contrary, Never doubt, never trouble yourſelves with theſe thoughts!—I intreat the ſinner that is in this ſtrait, to conſider, That it is Chriſt, and not their fathers, or mothers, or neighbours, or friends that muſt judge them: and if Chriſt condemns them, theſe cannot ſave them: and therefore common reaſon may tell them, that it is not from the words of ignorant men, but from the word of God that they muſt fetch their hopes of ſalvation.

When *Ahab* would enquire among the multitudes of flattering prophets, it was his death. They can flatter men into the ſnare, but they cannot bring them out. Oh, take the counſel of the Holy Ghoſt, Eph. v. 6, 7. "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for becauſe of theſe things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of diſobedience: be not ye therefore partakers with them; but ſave yourſelves from this untoward generation."

3. But the greateſt hindrances are in mens own hearts.

Some are ſo ignorant, that they know not what ſelf-examination is, nor what a miniſter means, when he perſuadeth them to try themſelves; or they know not that there is any neceſſity of it: but think every man is bound to believe that God is his father, and that his ſins are pardoned, whether it be true or falſe: and that it were a great fault to make any queſtion of it; or they do not think the aſſurance can be attained: or that there

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is any ſuch great difference betwixt one man and another: but that we are all Chriſtians, and therefore need not trouble ourſelves any farther: or at leaſt they know not wherein the difference lies; nor how to ſet upon this ſearching of their hearts. They have as groſs conceits of that regeneration, which they muſt ſearch for, as *Nicodemus* had, they are like thoſe in Acts xix. 2 that *knew not whether there were a Holy Ghoſt to be received or no.*

2. Some are ſo poſſeſſed with ſelf-love and pride that they will not ſo much as ſuſpect any danger to themſelves. Like a proud tradeſman who ſcorns the motion when his friends deſire him to caſt up his books, becauſe they are afraid he will break. As ſome fond parents that have an over-weaning conceit of their own children, and therefore will not believe or hear any evil of them: ſuch a fond ſelf-love doth hinder men from ſuſpecting and trying their ſtates.

3. Some are ſo guilty that they dare not try: they are ſo fearful that they ſhould find their eſtates unſound, that they dare not ſearch into them. And yet they dare venture them to a more dreadful trial.

4. Some are ſo in love with their ſin, and ſo in diſlike with the way of God, that they dare not fall on the trial of their ways, leſt they be forced from the courſe which they love.

5. Some are ſo reſolved already never to change their preſent ſtate, that they neglect examination as a uſeleſs thing: before they will turn ſo preciſe and ſeek a new way, when they have lived ſo long, and gone ſo far, they will put their eternal ſtate to the venture, come of it what will. And when a man is fully reſolved to hold to his way, and not to turn back, be it right or wrong, to what end ſhould he enquire whether he be right or no?

6. Moſt men are ſo taken up with their worldly affairs, and are ſo buſy in providing for the fleſh, that they cannot ſet themſelves to the trying of their title to heaven: they have another kind of happineſs in their eye, which will not ſuffer them to make ſure of heaven.

7. But

7. But the moſt common impediment is that falſe faith and hope commonly called Preſumption; which bears up the hearts of moſt of the world, and ſo keeps them from ſuſpecting their danger.

Thus you ſee what abundance of difficulties muſt be overcome before a man cloſely ſets upon the examining of his heart.

And if a man break through all theſe impediments, and ſet upon the duty, yet, of thoſe few who enquire after means of aſſurance, divers are deceived and miſcarry, eſpecially through theſe following cauſes.

1. There is ſuch confuſion and darkneſs in the ſoul of man, eſpecially of an unregenerate man, that he can ſcarcely tell what he doth, or what is in him. As one can hardly find any thing in a houſe where nothing keeps its place, but all is caſt on a heap together; ſo is it in the heart where all things are in diſorder, eſpecially when darkneſs is added to this diſorder: ſo that the heart is like an obſcure dungeon, where there is but a little crevice of light, and a man muſt rather grope than ſee. No wonder if men miſtake in ſearching ſuch a heart, and ſo miſcarry in judging their eſtates.

2. Beſides, many are reſolved what to judge before they try: they uſe the duty but to ſtrengthen their preſent conceits of themſelves, and not to find out the truth of their condition: like a bribed judge who examines each party as if he would judge uprightly, when he is reſolved which way the cauſe ſhall go beforehand. Juſt ſo do men examine their hearts.

Alſo men try themſelves by falſe marks and rules: not knowing wherein the truth of Chriſtianity doth conſiſt: ſome looking beyond, and ſome ſhort of the Scripture ſtandard.

Laſtly, Men frequently miſcarry in this work by ſetting on it in their own ſtrength. As ſome expect the Spirit ſhoud do it without them, ſo others attempt it themſelves with ſeeking or expecting the help of the Spirit: both theſe will certainly miſcarry in their aſſurance.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Farther Causes of Doubting among Christians.

BECAUSE the comfort of a Christian's life doth so much consist in his assurance of God's special love, and because the right way of obtaining it is so much controverted, I will here proceed a little farther in opening to you some other hindrances, which keep us Christians from comfortable certainty.

1. One great cause of doubting and uncertainty, is, The weakness of our grace. A little grace is next to none. Small things are hardly discerned. Most content themselves with a small measure of grace and do not follow on to spiritual strength and manhood. They believe so weakly, and love God so little, that they can scarce find whether they believe and love at all. Like a man in a swoon, whose pulse and breathing is so weak, that they can hardly be perceived whether they move at all, and consequently whether the man be alive or dead.

The chief remedy for such would be, to follow on their duty, till their grace be increased: ply your work: wait upon God in the use of his prescribed means, and he will undoubtedly bless you with increase. Oh that Christians would bestow most of that time in getting more grace, which they bestow in anxious doubtings whether they have any or none; and that they would lay out those serious affections in praying, and seeking to Christ for more grace, which they bestow in fruitless complaints! I beseech thee, take this advice as from God! And then, when thou believest strongly, and lovest fervently, thou canst not doubt whether thou believe and love or not: no more than a man that is burning hot can doubt whether he be warm: or a man that is strong and lusty can doubt whether he be alive.

2. Many

2. Many a ſoul lieth long under doubting, through the imperfection of their very reaſon, and exceeding weakneſs of their natural parts. Grace doth uſually rather employ our faculties on better objects, than add to the degree of their natural ſtrength. Many honeſt hearts have ſuch weak heads, that they know not how to perform the work of ſelf-trial: they are not able to argue the caſe: they will acknowledge the premiſes, and yet deny the apparent concluſion. Or if they be brought to acknowledge the concluſion, yet they do but ſtagger in their conceſſion, and hold it ſo weakly, that every aſſault may take it from them. If God do not ſome other way ſupply to theſe men the defect of their reaſon, I ſee not how they ſhould have clear and ſettled peace.

3. Another common cauſe of doubting and diſcomfort, is, the ſecret maintaining ſome known ſin.

When a man liveth in ſome unwarrantable practice, and God hath oft touched him for it, and yet he continueth it; it is no wonder if this perſon want both aſſurance and comfort. One would think that a ſoul that is ſo tender as to tremble, ſhould be as tender of ſinning: and yet ſad experience telleth us that it is frequently otherwiſe: I have known too many ſuch, that would complain and yet ſin, and accuſe themſelves, and yet ſin ſtill, yea and deſpair, and yet proceed in ſinning: and all arguments and means could not keep them from the wilful committing of that ſin again and again, which yet they themſelves did think would prove their deſtruction. Yea ſome will be carried away with thoſe ſins that ſeem moſt contrary to their dejected temper. I have known them that would fill mens ears with the conſtant lamentations of their miſerable ſtate, and accuſations againſt themſelves, as if they had been the moſt humble people in the world; and yet be as paſſionate in maintaining their innocency when another accuſeth them, and as intolerably peeviſh, and tender of their reputation in any thing they

are

are blamed for, as if they were the proudeſt perſons on earth.

This cheriſhing ſin doth hinder aſſurance theſe four ways:

1. It doth abate the degree of our graces, and ſo makes them undiſcernable.

2. It obſcureth that which it deſtroyeth not; for it beareth ſuch ſway that grace is not ſeen to ſtir, nor ſcarce heard ſpeak for the noiſe of this corruption.

3. It putteth out, or darkeneth the eye of the ſoul, and it benumbeth and ſtupifieth it.

4. But eſpecially it provoketh God to withdraw himſelf, his comforts, and the aſſiſtance of the Spirit, without which we may ſearch long enough before we have aſſurance. God hath made a ſeparation betwixt ſin and peace. As long as thou doſt cheriſh thy pride, thy love of the world, the deſires of the fleſh, or any unchriſtian practice, thou expecteſt aſſurance and comfort in vain. God will not encourage thee by his precious gifts in a courſe of ſinning. This worm will be gnawing upon thy conſcience: it will be a devouring canker to thy conſolations. Thou mayſt ſteal a ſpark of falſe comfort from thy worldly proſperity or delight: or thou mayeſt have it from ſome falſe opinions, or from the deluſions of Satan; but from God thou wilt have no comfort. However an *Antinomian* may tell thee that thy comforts have no dependance upon thy obedience, nor thy diſcomforts upon thy diſobedience: and therefore may ſpeak peace to thee in the courſe of thy ſinning; yet thou ſhalt find by experience that God will not. If any man ſet up his idols in his heart, and put the ſtumbling-block of his iniquities before his face, and cometh to a miniſter, or to God, to enquire for aſſurance and comfort, God will anſwer that man by himſelf, and inſtead of comforting him, he will ſet his face againſt him *He will anſwer him according to the multitude of his idols.*

5. Another

5. Another common cauſe of want of aſſurance and comfort is, when men grow lazy in the ſpiritual part of duty. As Dr. *Sibbs* ſaith truly, "It is the lazy Chriſtian, commonly, that lacketh aſſurance." The way of painful duty, is the way of fulleſt comfort. Chriſt carrieth all our comforts in his hand: if we are out of that way where Chriſt is to be met, we are of the way where comfort is to be had.

Theſe two ways doth this lazineſs debar us of our comforts.

1. By ſtopping the fountain, and cauſing *Chriſt* to with-hold this bleſſing from us. Parents uſe not to ſmile upon children in their neglects and diſobedience. So far as the Spirit is grieved, he will ſuſpend his conſolations. Aſſurance and peace are Chriſt's great encouragements to faithfulneſs and obedience: and therefore (though our obedience do not merit them, yet) they uſually riſe and fall with our diligence in duty. They that have entertained the *Antinomian* dotage to cover their idleneſs and viciouſneſs, may talk their nonſenſe againſt this at pleaſure, but the laborious Chriſtian knows it by experience. As prayer muſt have faith and fervency to procure its ſucceſs, beſides the bloodſhed and interceſſion of Chriſt, ſo muſt all other parts of our obedience. He that will ſay to us in that triumphing day, *Well done, good and faithful ſervant, enter thou into the joy of thy* Lord; will alſo comfort his ſervants in their moſt affectionate and ſpiritual duties, and ſay, *Well done, good and faithful ſervant, take this foretaſte of everlaſting joy.* If thou grow ſeldom and cuſtomary, and cold in duty, eſpecially in thy ſecret prayers to God, and yet findeſt no abatement in thy joys, I cannot but fear that thy joys are either carnal or diabolical.

2. The action of the ſoul upon ſuch excellent objects doth naturally bring conſolation with it. The very act of loving God in Chriſt doth bring inexpreſſible ſweetneſs into the ſoul. The ſoul

that is beſt furniſhed with grace, when it is not in action, is like a lute well ſtringed and tuned, which while it lieth ſtill, doth make no more muſic than a common piece of wood: but when it is taken up and handled by a ſkilful lutiſt, the melody is delightful. Some degree of comfort follows every good action, as heat accompanies fire, and as beams and influence iſſue from the ſun: which is ſo true, that the very heathens, upon the diſcharge of a good conſcience have found comfort and peace anſwerable; this is præmium ante prœmium; a reward before the reward.

As a man therefore that is cold ſhould not ſtand ſtill and ſay, I am ſo cold that I have no mind to labour, but labour till his coldneſs be gone, and heat excited: ſo he that wants the comfort of aſſurance, muſt not ſtand ſtill and ſay, I am ſo doubtful and uncomfortable that I have no mind for duty; but ply his duty, and exerciſe his graces, till he finds his doubts and diſcomforts vaniſh.

And thus I have ſhewn you the chief cauſes, why ſo many Chriſtians enjoy ſo little aſſurance and conſolation.

CHAP. IX.

Containing Directions to Examination, and ſome Marks of Trial.

I WILL not ſtand here to lay down the directions neceſſary for preparation to this duty, becauſe you may gather them from what is ſaid concerning the hindrances: for the contraries of thoſe hindrances will be the moſt neceſſary help. Only before you ſet upon it, I adviſe you to the obſervations of theſe rules.

1. Come not with too peremptory concluſions of yourſelves before-hand. Do not judge too confidently before you try.

2. Be

2. Be ſure to be ſo well acquainted with the Scripture, as to know what is the tenor of the covenant of grace, and what are the conditions of juſtification and glorification, and conſequently what are ſound marks to try thyſelf by.

3. Be a conſtant obſerver of the temper and motions of thy heart; moſt of the difficulty of the work doth lie in true and clear diſcerning of it. Be watchful in obſerving the actings both of grace and corruption, and the circumſtances of their actings: as, how frequent? How violent? How ſtrong or weak were the outward incitements? How great or ſmall the impediments? What delight, or loathing, or fear, or reluctancy did go with thoſe acts.

1. Empty thy mind of all thy other cares and thoughts, that they do not diſtract or divide thy mind: this work will be enough at once of itſelf, without joining others with it.

2. Then fall down before God, and in hearty prayer deſire the aſſiſtance of the Spirit, to diſcover to thee the plain truth of thy condition, and to enlighten thee in the whole progreſs of the work.

I will not digreſs to warn you here of the falſe rules and marks of trial, of which you muſt beware. But I will briefly adjoin ſome marks to try your title to this reſt.

1. Every ſoul that hath title to this Reſt, doth place his happineſs in it, and make it the ultimate end of his ſoul. This is the firſt mark; which is ſo plain a truth, that I need not ſtand to prove it. For this Reſt conſiſteth in the full and glorious enjoyment of God: and he that maketh not God his ultimate end, is in his heart a pagan and vile idolator.

Let me aſk thee then, Doſt thou truly account it thy chief happineſs to enjoy the Lord in glory, or doſt thou not? Canſt thou ſay with David,

The Lord is my portion? And, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? And whom on earth that I deſire in compariſon of thee?* If thou be an heir of Reſt, it is thus with thee. Though the fleſh will be pleading for its own delights, and the world will be creeping into thine affection, yet in thy ordinary, ſettled, prevailing judgment and affections, thou preferreſt God before all things in the world.

1. Thou makeſt Him the end of thy deſires and endeavours. The very reaſon why thou heareſt and prayeſt, why thou deſireſt to live and breathe on earth, is this, that thou mayſt ſeek the Lord. Thou ſeekeſt firſt the kingdom of God, and its righteouſneſs: though thou doſt not ſeek it ſo zealouſly as thou ſhouldſt; yet hath it the chief of thy deſires and endeavours: and nothing elſe is deſired or preferred before it.

2. Thou wilt think no labour or ſuffering too great to obtain it. And though the fleſh may ſometimes ſhrink, yet art thou reſolved and content to go through all.

3. If thou be an heir of Reſt, thy valuation of it will be ſo high, and thy affection to it ſo great, that thou wouldſt not exchange thy title to it, and hopes of it, for any worldly good whatſoever. If God would ſet before thee an eternity of earthly pleaſure on one hand, and the Reſt of the Saints on the other, and bid thee take thy choice; thou wouldſt refuſe the world, and chuſe this Reſt.

But if thou be yet in the fleſh, then it is clean contrary with thee. Then doſt thou in thy heart prefer thy worldly happineſs before God; and though thy tongue may ſay, that God is the chief good, yet thy heart doth not ſo eſteem him. For

1. The world is the chief end of thy deſires and endeavours; thy very heart is ſet upon it; thy greateſt care and labour is to maintain thy eſtate or credit, or fleſhly delights, But the life to come hath little of thy care or labour. Thou didſt never perceive ſo much excellency in the unſeen glory

as

as to draw thy heart ſo after it: but that little pains which thou beſtoweſt that way, it is but in the ſecond place. God hath but the world's leavings, and that time and labour which thou canſt ſpare from the world, or thoſe few cold and careleſs thoughts which follow thy conſtant, earneſt, and delightful thoughts of earthly things: neither wouldſt thou do any thing at all for heaven, if thou kneweſt how to keep the world: but leſt thou ſhouldſt be turned into hell, when thou canſt keep the world no longer, therefore thou wilt do ſomething.

2. Therefore it is that thou thinkeſt the way of God too ſtrict, and wilt not be perſuaded to the conſtant labour of walking according to the goſpel-rule: and when it comes to trial, that thou muſt forſake Chriſt or thy worldly happineſs, and the wind which was in thy back, doth turn in thy face, when thou will venture heaven rather than earth, and (as deſperate rebels uſed to ſay) thou wilt rather truſt God's mercy for thy ſoul, than man's for thy body; and ſo deny thy obedience to God.

3. And certainly if God would but give thee leave to live in health and wealth for ever on earth, thou wouldſt think it a better ſtate than reſt: let them ſeek for heaven that would, thou wouldſt think this thy chiefeſt happineſs. This is thy caſe, if thou be yet an unregenerate perſon, and haſt no title to the Saints' Reſt.

The ſecond mark which I ſhall give thee, to try whether thou be an heir of Reſt, is this,

As thou takeſt God for thy chief good, ſo, thou doſt heartily accept of Chriſt for thy only Saviour and Lord to bring thee to this Reſt. The former mark was the ſum of the firſt and great command of the law of nature, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God.* This ſecond mark is the ſum of the command or condition of the goſpel, *Believe in the Lord Jeſus, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.* And the performance of theſe two is the whole ſum or eſſence

of godlineſs and Chriſtianity. Obſerve therefore the parts of this mark, which is but a definition of faith.

1. Doſt thou find that thou art naturally a loſt, condemned man for the breach of the firſt covenant? And believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Mediator, who hath made a ſufficient ſatisfaction to the law? And hearing in the goſpel that he is offered without exception unto all, doſt thou heartily conſent that he alone ſhall be thy Saviour? And no further truſt to thy duties, and works, than as conditions required by him, and means appointed in ſubordination to him? Not looking at them as in the leaſt meaſure able to ſatisfy the curſe of the law, or as a legal righteouſneſs, nor any part of it? But art content to truſt thy ſalvation on the redemption made by Chriſt?

2. Art thou alſo content to take him for thy only Lord and King, to govern and guide thee by his laws and Spirit? And to obey him even when he commandeth the hardeſt duties, and thoſe which moſt croſs the deſires of the fleſh? Is it thy ſorrow when thou breakeſt thy reſolution herein? And thy joy when thou keepeſt cloſe in obedience to him? Wouldſt thou not change thy Lord and Maſter for all the world? Thus it is with every true Chriſtian. But if thou be an unbeliever, it is far otherwiſe. Thou mayeſt call Chriſt thy Lord and thy Saviour; but thou never foundeſt thyſelf ſo loſt without him, and lay thy ſalvation on him alone: or at leaſt thou didſt never heartily conſent that he ſhould govern thee as thy Lord: nor reſign up thy ſoul and life to be ruled by him; nor take his word for the law of thy thoughts and actions. It is like thou art content to be ſaved from hell by Chriſt when thou dieſt: but in the mean time ſhall command thee no further than will ſtand with any credit or pleaſure, or worldly eſtate and ends. And if he would give thee leave, thou hadſt far rather live after the world and fleſh, than after the Word and Spirit. And though thou mayeſt now and then have a motion

or

or purpoſe to the contrary; yet this that I have mentioned, is the ordinary deſire and choice of thine heart; and ſo thou art no true believer in Chriſt: for though thou confeſs him in words, yet in works thou doſt deny him, *Being diſobedient, and to every good work a diſapprover and a reprobate.* Tit. i. 16. This is the caſe of thoſe that ſhall be ſhut out of the Saints' Reſt.

CHAP. X.

The Reaſon of the Saints' Afflictions here.

A FURTHER uſe which we muſt make of the preſent doctrine is, To inform us why the people of God ſuffer ſo much in this life. What wonder? When you ſee their Reſt doth yet remain: they are not yet come to their reſting-place. We would all fain have continual proſperity, becauſe it is pleaſing to the fleſh; but we conſider not the unreaſonableneſs of ſuch deſires. We are like children, who if they ſee any thing which their appetite deſireth, cry for it; and if you tell them that it is unwholeſome, or hurtful for them, they are never the more quieted; or if you go about to heal any ſore that they have, they will not endure you to hurt them, though you tell them, that they cannot otherwiſe be healed; their ſenſe is too ſtrong for their reaſon, and therefore reaſon doth little perſuade them. Even ſo it is with us, when God is afflicting us: he giveth us reaſons why we muſt bear it, ſo that our reaſon is oft convinced and ſatisfied, and yet we cry and complain ſtill; it is not reaſon, but eaſe that we muſt have: ſpiritual remedies may cure the Spirit's maladies; but that will not content the fleſh.

But methinks Chriſtians ſhould have another palate than that of the fleſh, to try and reliſh providences by: God hath given them the Spirit to ſubdue the fleſh. And therefore I ſhall here give

them ſome reaſons of God's dealings in their preſent ſufferings, whereby the equity and mercy therein may appear: and they ſhall be only ſuch as are drawn from the reference that theſe afflictions have to our Reſt; which being a Chriſtian's happineſs and ultimate end, will direct him in judging of all eſtates and means.

1. Conſider then, that labour and trouble are the common way to Reſt, both in the courſe of nature and of grace. Can there poſſibly be Reſt without motion and wearineſs? Do you not travel and toil firſt, and then reſt afterwards? The day for labour goes firſt, and then the night for Reſt doth follow. Why ſhould we deſire the courſe of grace to be perverted, any more than we would do the courſe of nature? God did once dry up the ſea, to make a paſſage for his people? and once made the ſun in the firmament to ſtand ſtill: but muſt he do ſo always? Or, as oft as we would have him? It is his eſtabliſhed decree, *That through many tribulations we muſt enter into the kingdom of heaven*, Acts xiv. 22. And *that if we ſuffer with him, we ſhall alſo be glorified with him*, 2 Tim. ii. 12. And what are we, that God's ſtatutes ſhould be reverſed for our pleaſure? As *Bildad* ſaid to *Job*, chap. xviii. 4. *Shall the earth be forſaken for thee? Or the rock be removed out of his place?* So, *muſt* God *pervert* his eſtabliſhed order for thee?

2. Conſider alſo, That afflictions are exceeding uſeful to us, to keep us from miſtaking our Reſting-place, and ſo taking up ſhort of it. A Chriſtian's motions heaven-wards is voluntary, and not conſtrained. Thoſe means therefore are moſt profitable to him, which help his underſtanding and will in this proſecution. The moſt dangerous miſtake that our ſouls are capable of, is to take the creature for God, and earth for heaven. And yet, alas, how common is this! Though we are aſhamed to ſpeak ſo much with our tongues, yet how oft do our hearts ſay, *It is beſt being here!* And how contented are we with an earthly portion! So that

that I fear, God would diſpleaſe moſt of us more to afflict us here, and promiſe us reſt hereafter, than to give us our heart's deſire on earth, though he had never made us a promiſe of heaven. As if the creature without God, were better than God without the creature. Alas, how apt are we, like fooliſh children, when we are buſy at our ſports and worldly employments, to forget both our father and our home? Therefore it is a hard thing for a rich man to enter into heaven, becauſe it is hard for him to value it more than earth, and not think he is well already. Come to a man that hath the world at will, and tell him, This is not your happineſs, you have higher things to look after; and how little will he regard you? But when affliction comes, it ſpeaks convincingly, and will be heard when preachers cannot.

Sometimes a ſincere man begins to be lifted up with applauſe; and ſometimes being in health and proſperity, he hath loſt his reliſh of Chriſt, and the joys above; till God break in upon his riches, and ſcatter them abroad, or upon his children, or upon his conſcience, or upon the health of his body, and break down his mount which he thought ſo ſtrong: and then when he lieth in *Manaſſeh's* fetters, or is faſtened to his bed with pining ſickneſs, O what an opportunity hath the Spirit to plead with his ſoul? When the world is worth nothing, then heaven is worth ſomething.

How oft have I been ready to think myſelf at home, till ſickneſs hath roundly told me, I was miſtaken? And how apt yet to fall into the ſame diſeaſe, which prevaileth till it be removed by the ſame cure? If our dear Lord did not put theſe thorns into our bed, we ſhould ſleep out our lives, and loſe our glory.

3. Conſider afflictions are God's moſt effectual means, to keep us from ſtraggling out of the way to our Reſt. If he had not ſet a hedge of thorns on the right hand, and on the left, we ſhould hardly keep the way to heaven: if there be but one

one gap open between theſe thorns, how ready are we to turn out at it? But when we cannot go aſtray, but theſe thorns will prick us, perhaps we will be content to hold the way. When we grow wanton, or worldly, or proud; what a notable means is ſickneſs, or other afflictions, to reduce us? It is every chriſtian, as well as *Luther*, that may call afflictions one of his beſt ſchoolmaſters. Many a one, as well as *David*, may ſay by experience, *Before I was afflicted I went aſtray; but now have I keptthy precepts.* Many a thouſand poor recovered ſinners may cry, O healthful ſickneſs? O comfortable ſorrows! O gainful loſſes! O enriching poverty! O bleſſed day, that ever I was afflicted! It is not only *the pleaſant ſtreams and the green paſtures, but his rod and ſtaff alſo that are our comfort.* Though I know it is the word and ſpirit that do the work; yet certainly the time of ſuffering is ſo opportune a ſeaſon, that the ſame word will take them then, which before was obſerved: it doth ſo unbolt the door of the heart, that a miniſter or a friend may then be heard, and the word may have eaſier entrance to the affections.

4. Conſider, Afflictions are God's moſt effectual means to make us mend our pace in the way to our reſt. They are his rod, and his ſpur: what ſluggard will not awake and ſtir when he feeleth them? It were well if mere love would prevail with us, and that we were rather drawn to heaven, than driven; but ſeeing our hearts are ſo bad that mercy will not do it; it is better we put on with the ſharpeſt ſcourge, than loiter our time till the doors are ſhut.

O what a difference is there betwixt our prayers in health and in ſickneſs! betwixt our proſperity and adverſity-repentings! He that before had not a tear to ſhed, or a groan to utter, now can ſob, and ſigh, and weep; he that was wont to lie like a block in prayer, and ſcarce minded what he ſaid to God; now affliction preſſeth him down, how earneſtly can he beg? How doth he

he mingle his prayers and tears? And cry out, what a perſon he will be, if God will but hear him and deliver him? Alas, if we did not ſometimes feel the ſpur, what a ſlow pace would moſt of us hold toward heaven.

Seeing then that our vile natures require, why ſhould we be unwilling God ſhould do us good, by a ſharp means? Sure *that* is the beſt dealing for us, which ſureſt and ſooneſt doth further us for heaven. I leave thee, chriſtian, to judge by thy own experience, whether thou doſt not go more watchfully, and lively and ſpeedily in thy way to Reſt, in thy ſufferings, than thou doſt in thy moſt pleaſing and proſperous ſtate.

Laſtly, conſider, God doth ſeldom give his people ſo ſweet a fore-taſte of their future Reſt, as in their deep afflictions. He keepeth his moſt precious cordials for the time of our greateſt faintings and dangers. God is not ſo laviſh of his choice favours as to beſtow them unſeaſonably; he gives them at ſo fit a time, when he knoweth they are needful, and will be valued; and when he is ſure to be thanked for them, and his people rejoiced by them. Eſpecially when our ſufferings are more directly for his cauſe, then doth he ſeldom fail of ſweetening the bitter cup. Therefore have the Martyrs been poſſeſſors of the higheſt joys, and therefore were they ſo ambitious of martyrdom. I do not think that *Paul* and *Silas* did ever ſing more joyfully, than when they were ſore with ſcourgings, and faſt in the inner priſon, with their feet in the ſtocks. When did Chriſt preach ſuch comforts to his diſciples, and aſſure them of his providing them manſions with himſelf, as when he was ready to leave them, and their hearts were ſorrowful becauſe of his departure? When did he appear among them, and ſay, *Peace be unto you*, but when they were ſhut up together for fear of the perſecuting *Jews?* When did *Stephen* ſee heaven opened, but when he was giving up his life for the teſtimony of *Jeſus?* And though we be never put to the ſuffering of martyrdom

tyrdom, yet God knoweth that in our natural ſufferings we need ſupport.

Seeing then that the time of affliction, is the time of our moſt pure, ſpiritual, and heavenly joy, for the moſt part; why ſhould a chriſtian think it ſo bad a time? Is not that our beſt eſtate wherein we have moſt of God? Why elſe do we deſire to come to heaven? If we look for a heaven of fleſhly delights, we ſhall find ourſelves miſtaken. Conclude then that affliction is not ſo bad a ſtate in our way to Reſt, as the fleſh would make it. Are we no wiſer than God? Doth not he know what is good for us, better than we? Or is he not as careful of our good, as we are of our own? Ah, woe to us if he were not much more? And if he did not love us better than we love either him or ourſelves.

But let us hear a little what it is that we can object.

1. Oh! ſaith one, I could bear any other affliction ſave this: if God had touched me in any thing elſe, I could have undergone it patiently; but it is my deareſt friend, or child, or wife, or my health itſelf.

I anſwer, It ſeemeth God hath hit the right vein, where thy moſt inflamed, diſtempered blood did lie: it is his conſtant courſe to pull down men's idols, and take away that which is dearer to them than himſelf. There it is that his jealouſy is kindled; and there it is that the ſoul is moſt endangered. If God ſhould have taken from thee that which thou canſt let go for him, and not that which thou canſt not; or have afflicted thee where hou canſt bear it, and not where thou canſt not; thy idol would neither have been diſcovered nor removed; this would neither have been a ſufficient trial to thee, nor a cure, but have confirmed thee in thy idolatry.

Objection 2. Oh! but ſaith another, If God would but deliver me out of it at laſt, I could be content to bear it: but I have an incurable ſickneſs, and am like to live or die in poverty, or diſgrace, or diſtreſs. I anſwer,

I anſwer, 1. Is it nothing that he hath promiſed, *It ſhall work for thy good?* Rom. viii. 28, and *that with the affliction he will make a way to eſcape?* that he will be with thee in it? and deliver thee in the fitteſt manner and ſeaſon?

2. Is it not enough that thou art ſure to be delivered at death, and that with ſo full a deliverance? Oh what curſed unbelief doth this diſcover in our hearts! That we would be more thankful to be turned back again into the ſtormy ſea of the world, than to be ſafely and ſpeedily landed at our Reſt! and would be glad of a few years inferior mercies at a diſtance, than to enter upon the eternal inheritance with Chriſt! Do we call God our chief good, and heaven our happineſs? and yet is it no mercy or deliverance to be taken hence, and put into that poſſeſſion?

Objection 3. Oh, but ſaith another, If my affliction did not diſable me from duty, I could bear it; but it maketh me uſeleſs, and utterly unprofitable.

Anſwer. 1. For that duty which tendeth to thy own benefit, it doth not diſable thee; but is the greateſt help that thou canſt expect. Thou uſeſt to complain of coldneſs, and dulneſs, and worldlineſs and ſecurity; if affliction will not help thee againſt all theſe, by warning, quickening, rouſing thy ſpirit, I know not what will. Sure thou wilt repent thoroughly, and pray fervently, and mind God and heaven more ſeriouſly, either now or never.

2. As for our duty to others, and ſervice to the church, it is not thy duty when God doth diſable thee. He may call thee out of the vineyard in this reſpect, even before he call thee by death. If he lay thee in the grave, and put others in thy place, is this any wrong to thee? So, if he call thee out before thy death, and ſet others to do the work, ſhouldſt thou not be as well content? Muſt God do all the work by thee? Hath he not many others as dear to him, and as fit for the employment?

employment? But alas, what deceitfulneſs lyeth in theſe hearts! When we have time, and health, and opportunity to work, then we loiter, and do our Maſter but poor ſervice; but when he layeth affliction upon us, then we complain that he diſableth us for his work, and yet perhaps we are ſtill negligent in that part of the work which we can do. So, when we are in health and proſperity we forget the public, and are careleſs of other mens miſeries and wants, and mind almoſt nothing but ourſelves: but when God afflicteth us, though he excite us more to duty for ourſelves, yet we complain that he diſableth us for our duty to others: as if on the ſudden we were grown ſo charitable, that we regard other mens ſouls more than our own! But is not the hand of fleſh in all this diſſimulation, pleading its own cauſe? What pride of heart is this, to think that other men cannot do the work as well as we? or that God cannot ſee to his church, and provide for his people without us?

Object. 4. Oh, but ſaith another, it is my friends that are my afflicters: they diſclaim me, and will ſcarce look at me; they cenſure me, and backbite me, and ſlander me, and look upon me with a diſdainful eye; if it were others, I could bear it, I look for no better from them: but when thoſe that are my delight, and that I looked for comfort and refreſhing from, when theſe are as thorns in my ſides, who can bear it?

Anſw. 1. Whoever is the inſtrument, the affliction is from God, and the provoking cauſe from thyſelf: and were it not fitter that thou look more to God and thyſelf?

2. Doſt thou not know, that good men are ſtill ſinful in part? and that their hearts are naturally deceitful, and deſperately wicked, as well as others? Learn therefore a better leſſon from the prophet Micah, vii. 5, 6, 7. *Truſt not* (too much) *in a friend, nor put confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy boſom: but look rather to the Lord, and wait for the God of thy ſalvation.*

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It is likely thou haſt given that love and truſt to men, which was due only to God; or which thou had denied him; and then no wonder if he chaſtiſe thee by them. If we would uſe our friends as friends, God would make them our helps and comforts: but when we once make them our gods by exceſſive love and truſt, then he ſuffers them to be our accuſers and tormentors: it is more ſafe to me to have any creature a fatan than a god; to be tormented by them, than to idolize them. Till thou haſt learned to ſuffer from the good, as well as the ungodly, never look to live a contented or comfortable life, or ever think thou haſt truly learned the art of ſuffering.

Object. 5. Oh! but if I had that conſolation, which you ſay God reſerveth for our ſuffering times, I ſhould ſuffer more contentedly; but I do not perceive any ſuch thing.

Anſw. 1. The more you ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake, the more of this bleſſing you may expect: and the more you ſuffer for your own evil-doing, the longer you muſt look to ſtay till the ſweetneſs come. When we have by our folly provoked God to chaſtiſe us, ſhall we preſently look that he ſhould fill us with comfort? "That were (as Mr. *Paul Bayn* ſaith) to make affliction to be no affliction." What good would the bitterneſs do us, if it be preſently drowned in that ſweetneſs? It is well in ſuch ſufferings, if you have but ſupporting grace; and if your ſufferings are ſanctified to work out your ſin.

2. Do you not neglect or reſiſt the comfort which you deſire? God hath filled precepts and promiſes, and other of his providences, with matter of comfort: if you overlook all theſe, and obſerve one croſs more than a thouſand mercies, who maketh you uncomfortable but yourſelves? If you reſolve you will not be comfortable as long as any thing aileth your fleſh, you may ſtay till death before you have comfort.

3. Have

3. Have your afflictions wrought kindly with you, and fitted you for comfort? Have they humbled you, and brought you to a faithful confession and reformation of your beloved sins? and made you set close to your neglected duties? and weaned your hearts from their former idols? and brought them unfeignedly to take God for their portion and their rest? If this be not done, how can you expect comfort? Should God bind up the sore while it festereth at the bottom? It is not mere suffering that prepares you for comfort; but the success and fruit of suffering upon your hearts.

CHAP. XI.

An Exhortation to those that have got Assurance of this Rest, that they would do all they possibly can to help others to it.

HATH God set before us such a glorious prize as this everlasting Rest, and made a man capable of such an inconceivable happiness? Why then do not all the children of the kingdom bestir themselves more to help others to the enjoyment of it? Alas, how little are poor souls about us, beholden to the most of us? We see the glory of the kingdom, and they do not: we see the misery and torment of those that miss it, and they do not: we see them wandering quite out of the way, and know if they hold on, they can never come there; and they discern not this themselves. And yet we will not set upon them seriously, and shew them their danger and error, and help to bring them into the way that they may live. Alas, how few christians are to be found, that live as men that are made to do good, and that set themselves with all their might to the saving of souls! No thanks to us, if heaven be not empty, and if the souls of our brethren perish not for ever.

But

But becauſe this is a duty, which ſo many neglect, and ſo few are convinced that God doth expect it at their hands, and yet a duty of ſo high concernment to the glory of God, and the happineſs of men; I will ſpeak of it ſomewhat the more largely; and ſhew you, 1. Wherein it doth conſiſt. 2. What is the cauſe that it is ſo neglected. 3. Give ſome conſiderations to perſuade you to the performance of it, and others to the bearing of it. 4. Apply this more particularly to ſome perſons whom it doth nearly concern.

1. I would have you well underſtand what is this work which I am perſuading you to. Know then, on the negative,

1. It is not to invade the office of the miniſtry, and every man to turn a public preacher. I would not have you go beyond the bounds of your calling: we ſee by daily experience, what fruits thoſe mens teaching doth bring forth, who run uncalled of God, and thruſt themſelves into the place of public teachers, thinking themſelves the fitteſt for the work in the pride of their hearts, while they had need to be taught the very principles of religion: how little doth God bleſs the labours of theſe ſelf-conceited intruders, even though they be ordained.

2. Neither do I perſuade you to a zealous promoting of factions and parties, and venting of uncertain opinions, which mens ſalvation is little concerned in. Alas, what advantage hath the devil always got in the church by this impoſture! The time that ſhould be employed in drawing mens ſouls from ſin to Chriſt, is employed in drawing them to opinions and parties. When men are fallen in love with their own conceits, and think themſelves the wiſeſt, how diligently do they labour to get them followers? as if to make a man a proſelyte to their opinions, were as happy a work as to convert him to Chriſt? And when they fall among the lighter, ignorant ſort of men, whoſe religion is all in the brain, and on their tongue,

tongue, they ſeldom fail of ſucceſs. Theſe men ſhall ſhortly know, that to bring a man to the knowledge and love of Chriſt, is another kind of work, than to bring him to be babtized again, or to be of ſuch a church or ſuch a ſide. Unhappy are the ſouls that are taken in the ſnare; who when they have ſpent their lives in contending for the circumſtantials of religion, which ſhould have been ſpent in ſtudying and loving the Lord Jeſus, do in the end reap an empty harveſt, ſuitable to their empty profeſſion.

3. Nor do I perſuade you to ſpeak againſt mens faults behind their back, and be ſilent before their faces, as the common cuſtom of the world is. To tell other men of their faults, tendeth little to their reformation, if they hear it not themſelves. To whiſper mens faults to others, as it cometh not from love, or from an honeſt principle, ſo uſually doth it produce no good effect: for if the party hear not of it, it cannot better him: if he do, he will take it but as the reproach of an enemy, and not as the faithful council of a friend, and as that which is ſpoken to make him odious, and not to make him virtuous: it tendeth not to provoke to godlineſs, but to raiſe contention; for *a whiſperer ſeparateth chief friends.* And how few ſhall we find that make conſcience of this horrible ſin? Or that will confeſs it? Eſpecially if men are ſpeaking of their enemies, or thoſe that have wronged them; or whom they ſuppoſe to have wronged them; or if it be of one that eclipſeth their glory, or that ſtandeth in the way of their gain or eſteem: or if it be one that differeth from them in judgement; or of one that is commonly ſpoke againſt by others; who is it that maketh any conſcience of backbiting ſuch as theſe? And you ſhall ever obſerve, that the forwarder they are to backbiting, the more backward always to faithful admoniſhing; and none ſpeak leſs of a man's faults to his face, than thoſe that ſpeak moſt of them behind his back.

So

So far am I from perſuading therefore to this prepoſterous courſe, that I would adviſe you to oppoſe it wherever you meet with it. See that you never hear a man ſpeaking againſt his neighbour behind his back (without ſome ſpecial cauſe or call) but preſently rebuke him: aſk him whether he hath ſpoke theſe things in a way of love to his face? If he hath not, aſk him how he dare to pervert God's preſcribed order, who commandeth to rebuke our neighbour plainly, and to tell him his fault firſt in private, and then before witneſs, till he ſee whether he will be won, or not? And how he dare do as he would not be done by?

The duty therefore that I would preſs you to, is of another nature, and it conſiſteth in theſe things following:

1. That you get your hearts affected with the miſery of your brethrens ſouls; be compaſſionate towards them; yearn after their ſalvation. If you did earneſtly long after their converſion, and your hearts were fully ſet to do them good, it would ſet you on work, and God would uſually bleſs it.

2. Take all opportunities that you poſſibly can, to inſtruct and help them to the attaining of ſalvation. And leſt you ſhould not know how to manage this work, let me tell you more particularly what you are herein to do. 1. If it be an ignorant perſon you have to deal with, who is an utter ſtranger to the myſteries of religion, and to the work of regeneration, the firſt thing you have to do is, acquaint him with theſe doctrines: labour to make him underſtand wherein man's chief happineſs doth conſiſt: and how far he was once poſſeſſed of it; and what law and covenant God then made with him; and how he broke it; and what penalty he incurred, and what miſery he brought himſelf into thereby; teach him what need men had of a Redeemer; and how Chriſt in mercy did interpoſe and bear the penalty, and

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on what terms only ſalvation is now to be attained: and what courſe Chriſt taketh to draw men to himſelf: and what are the riches and privileges that believers have in him.

If when he underſtands theſe things, he be not moved by them; or if you find that the ſtop lieth in his will and affections, and in the hardneſs of his heart, and in the intereſt that the fleſh and the world have got in him; then ſhew him the excellency of the glory which he neglecteth, and the intolerableneſs of the loſs of it; and the extremity and eternity of the torments of the damned, and how certainly they muſt endure them; and how juſt it is for their wilful refuſals of grace; and how heinous a ſin it is to reject ſuch free and abundant mercy, and to tread under foot the blood of the covenant: ſhew him the certainty, nearneſs, and terrors of death and judgment, and the vanity of all things below, which now he is taken up with: and how little they will beſtead him in that time of his extremity. Shew him that by nature he himſelf is a child of wrath, an enemy to God; and by actual ſin much more: ſhew him the vile and heinous nature of ſin; the abſolute neceſſity he ſtandeth in of a Saviour; the freeneſs of the promiſe; the fulneſs of Chriſt: the ſufficiency of his ſatisfaction; his readineſs to receive all that are willing to be his; and the authority and dominion which he hath purchaſed over us. Shew him alſo the abſolute neceſſity of regeneration, faith, and holineſs, how impoſſible it is to have ſalvation by Chriſt without theſe; and what they are, and the true nature of them.

If, when he underſtandeth all this, you find his ſoul enthralled in falſe hopes, perſuading himſelf that he is a true believer, and pardoned, and reconciled, and ſhall be ſaved by Chriſt, and all this upon falſe grounds, (which is a common caſe) then urge him hard to examine his ſtate, ſhew him the neceſſity of trying; the danger of being deceived; the commonneſs and eaſineſs of miſtaking through the deceitfulneſs of the heart; the extreme

extreme madneſs of putting it to a blind venture; or of reſting in negligent or wilful uncertainty: help him in trying himſelf; produce ſome undeniable evidences from ſcripture: aſk him, whether theſe be in him or not? Whether he ever found ſuch workings or diſpoſitions in his heart? Urge him to a rational anſwer: do not leave him till you have convinced him of his miſery; and then ſeaſonably and wiſely ſhew him the remedy.

If he produce ſome gifts or duties, or works, know to what end he doth produce them: if to join with Chriſt in compoſing him a righteouſneſs, ſhew him how vain and deſtructive they are; if it be by way of evidence to prove his title to Chriſt; ſhew him wherein the life of Chriſtianity doth conſiſt, and how far he muſt go further, if he will be Chriſt's diſciple. In the mean time, that he be not diſcouraged with hearing of ſo high a meaſure, ſhew him the way by which he muſt attain it. Be ſure to draw him to the uſe of all means: ſet him on hearing and reading the word, calling upon God, accompanying the godly: perſuade him to leave his actual ſin, and to get out of all ways of temptation: eſpecially to forſake ungodly company; and to wait patiently on God in the uſe of means: and ſhew him the ſtrong hopes that in ſo doing he may have a bleſſing; this being the way that God will be found in.

If you perceive him poſſeſſed with many prejudices againſt the way of holineſs, ſhew him their falſehood, and with wiſdom and meekneſs anſwer his objections.

If he be addicted to delay duties he is convinced of, or lazineſs and ſtupidity endanger his ſoul; then lay it on more powerfully, and ſet home upon his heart the moſt piercing conſiderations, and labour to faſten them as thorns in his conſcience, that he may find no eaſe or reſt till he change his eſtate.

But becauſe in all works the manner of doing them is of the greateſt moment, and the right performance

formance doth much further the success; I will here adjoin a few directions, which you must be sure to observe in this work of exhortation; for it is not every advice that useth to succeed, nor any manner of doing it that will serve the turn. Observe therefore these rules:

1. Set upon the work sincerely, and with right intentions. Let thy end be the glory of God in the party's salvation. Do it, not to get a name or esteem to thyself; or to bring men to depend upon thee; or to get thee many followers; do not as many parents and masters will do, viz. rebuke their children and servants for those sins that displease them, and are against their profit or their humours; but never seek in the right way that God hath appointetd to save their souls. But be sure the main end be to recover them from misery, and bring them into the way of eternal rest.

2. Do it speedily, as you would not have them delay your return, so do thou not delay to seek their return. You are purposing long to speak to such an ignorant neighbour, and to deal with such a scandalous sinner; and yet you have never done it. Alas, he runs on the score all this while; he goes deeper in debt: wrath is heaping up; sin taketh root; custom doth more fasten him; engagements to sin grow stronger and more numerous; conscience grows seared; the heart grows hardened; while you delay, the devil rules and rejoiceth; Christ is shut out; the Spirit is repulsed; God is daily dishonoured: his law is violated: he is without a servant, and that service from him which he should have; time runs on; the day of visitation hasteth; death and judgment are at the door: and what if the man die and miss of heaven, while you are proposing to teach him and help him to it? If in case of his bodily distress, you must not bid him go and call again to-morrow, when you have it by you; how much less you may delay the succour of his soul? If once death snatch him away, he is then out of the reach of your charity. That Physician is no better than a murderer, that negligently

negligently delayeth till his patient is dead or paſt cure. Delay in duty is a great degree of diſobedience, though you afterwards perform it. It ſhews an ill heart that is indiſpoſed to the work. O how many a poor ſinner periſheth, or grows rooted, and next to incurable in ſin, while we are purpoſing to ſeek their recovery! Opportunities laſt not always. When thou heareſt that the ſinner is dead, or removed, or grown obſtinate: will not conſcience ſay to thee, How knoweſt thou but thou mighteſt have prevented the damnation of a ſoul? Lay by excuſes then, and all leſſer buſineſs, and obey God's command, *Exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, leſt any be hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin.*

3. Let thy exhortation proceed from compaſſion and love, and let the manner of it clearly ſhew the perſon thou dealeſt with, that it does. It is not jeering, or ſcorning, or reproaching a man for his fault, that is a likely way to work his reformation: nor is it the right way to convert him to God, to rail at him, and vilify him with words of diſgrace. Men will take them for their enemies that thus deal with them; and the words of an enemy are little perſuading. Lay by your paſſion therefore, and go poor ſinners with tears in your eyes, that they may ſee you indeed believe them to be miſerable; and that you unfeignedly pity their caſe: deal with them with earneſt, humble entreatings. Let them ſee that your very bowels yearn over them, and that it is the very deſire of their hearts to do them good: let them perceive that you have no other end but the procuring of your everlaſting happineſs; and that it is a ſure ſenſe of their danger, and your love to their ſouls that forces you to ſpeak: even becauſe you know the terrors of the Lord, and for fear leſt you ſhould ſee them in eternal torments. Say to them, Why, friend, you know it is no advantage of my own that I ſeek: the way to pleaſe you, and to keep your friendſhip, were to ſooth you in your own way, or to let you alone; but love will not ſuffer

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me to ſee you periſh, and be ſilent: I ſeek nothing at your hands but that which is neceſſary to your own happineſs. It is yourſelf that will have the gain and comfort, if you come unto Chriſt. If men would thus go to every ignorant, wicked neighbour they have, and thus deal with them. O what bleſſed fruit ſhould we quickly ſee!

I am aſhamed to hear ſome lazy hypocritical wretches revile their poor ignorant neighbours, and ſeparate from their company, and judge them unfit for their ſociety, before they ever once tried them with this compaſſionate exhortation! O you little know what a prevailing courſe this were like to prove! And how few of the vileſt drunkards or ſwearers would prove ſo obſtinate as wholly to reject or deſpiſe the exhortation of love! I know it muſt be God that muſt change mens hearts; but I know alſo that God worketh by means, and when he meaneth to prevail with men, he uſually ſetteth the means accordingly, and ſtirreth up men to plead with them in a prevailing way, and ſo ſetteth in with his grace, and maketh it ſucceſsful. Certainly, thoſe that have tried can tell you by experience, that there is no way ſo prevailing with men, as the way of compaſſion and love. So much of theſe as they diſcern in your exhortation, uſually ſo much doth it ſucceed with their hearts: and therefore I beſeech thoſe that are faithful, to practiſe this courſe. Alas, we ſee moſt people among us, yea thoſe that would ſeem godly, cannot bear a reproof that comes not in meekneſs and love! If there be the leaſt paſſion, or reliſh of diſgrace in it, they are ready to ſpit in your face. Yea, if you do not ſweeten your reproof with fair words, they cannot digeſt it, but their hearts will riſe up againſt you, inſtead of a thankful ſubmiſſion and reformation. O that it were too evident that the phariſee is yet alive in the breaſts of many thouſands that ſeem religious; even in this one point of bearing plain and ſharp reproof! *They bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on mens ſhoulders: but they themſelves will not move them with*

with one of their fingers, Matt. xxiii. 4. So far are they from doing in this, as they would be done by.

4. Another direction I would give you, is this; do it with all poſſible plainneſs and faithfulneſs. Do not dally with men, and hide from them their miſery or danger, or any part of it. Do not make their ſins leſs than they are; nor ſpeak of them in a falſe hope, no more than you would diſcourage the ſound hope of the righteous. If you ſee his caſe dangerous, tell him plainly of it: neighbour, I am afraid God hath not yet renewed your ſoul; and that it is yet a ſtranger to the great work of regeneration and ſanctification: I doubt you are not yet recovered from the power of Satan to God, nor brought out of the ſtate of wrath which you were born in, and have lived in: I doubt you have not choſen Chriſt above all, nor ſet your heart upon him, nor unfeignedly taken him for your ſovereign Lord. If you had, ſure you durſt not ſo eaſily diſobey him: you could not ſo neglect him and his worſhip in your family and in public: you could not ſo eagerly follow the world, and talk of almoſt nothing but the things of this world, while Chriſt is ſeldom mentioned by you. If you were in Chriſt, you would become a new creature; old things would be paſſed away, and all things would become new: you would have new thoughts, and new talk, and new company, and new endeavours, and a new converſation: certainly without theſe you can never be ſaved: you may think otherwiſe, and hope better as long as you will, but your hopes will deceive you, and periſh with you. Alas, it is not as you will, nor as I will, who ſhall be ſaved, but it is as God will: and God hath told us, that "Without holineſs none ſhall ſee him: and, Except we be born again, we cannot enter into his kingdom. And that all that would not have Chriſt to reign over them, ſhall be brought forth, and deſtroyed before him." O therefore look to your ſtate in time.

Thus must you deal roundly and faithfully with men, if ever you intend to do them good. It is not hovering at a distance in a general discourse that will serve the turn. It is not in curing mens souls as in curing their bodies, where they must not know their danger, lest it sadden them, and hinder the cure. They are here agents in their own cure, and if they know not their misery, they will never bewail it, nor know how much need they have of a Saviour: If they know not the worst, they will not labour to prevent it; but will sit still and loiter till they drop into perdition, and will trifle out their time till it be too late. And therefore speak to men, as Christ to the Pharisees, till they knew that he meant *them*. Deal plainly, or you but deceive and destroy them.

5. And as you must do it plainly, so also seriously, zealously, and effectually. The exceeding stupidity and deadness of mens hearts is such, that no other dealing will ordinarily work. You must call loud to awake a man in a swoon or lethargy. If you speak to the common sort of men, of the evil of their sin, of the need of Christ, of the danger of their souls, of the necessity of regeneration, they will warily and unwillingly give you the hearing, and put off all with a sigh, or a few good wishes, and say, *God forgive us, we are all sinners*, and there is an end. If ever you will do them good therefore, you must sharpen your exhortation, and set it home, and follow it, till you have rouzed them up, and made them begin to look about them. Let them know that thou speakest not to them of indifferent things, nor about children's games, or matters of a few years or days continuance, nor yet about matters of uncertainty, which may never come to pass: but it is about the saving and damning of their souls and bodies; and whether they shall be blessed with Christ, or tormented with devils, and that for ever and ever; it is, how to stand before God in judgment, and what answer to give, and how they are like to speed; and this judgment

judgment and eternal ſtate they ſhall very ſhortly ſee, they are almoſt at it; yet a few more nights and days, and they ſhall be at that laſt day: a few more breaths, they have to breathe, and they ſhall breathe their laſt; and then as certainly ſhall they ſee that mighty change, as the heaven over their heads, and the earth under their feet. O labour to make men know, that it is mad jeſting about ſalvation or damnation; and that heaven and hell are not matters to be played with, or paſſed over with a few careleſs thoughts! It is moſt certain that one of theſe days thou ſhalt be either in everlaſting, unchangeable joy or torment, and doth it not awake thee? Are they ſo few that find the way of death? Is it ſo hard to eſcape? ſo eaſy to miſcarry? and that while we fear nothing, but think all is well? And yet you ſit ſtill and trifle! Why what do you mean? What do you think on? The world is paſſing away: its pleaſures are fading: its honours are leaving you: its profits will prove unprofitable to you: heaven or hell are a little before you: God is juſt and jealous; his threatnings are true: the great day of his judgment will be terrible: your time runs on: your lives are uncertain: you are far behind hand: you have loitered long: your caſe is dangerous: your ſouls are far gone in ſin: you are ſtrangers to God: you are hardened in all evil cuſtoms: you have no aſſurance of comfort to ſhew:—If you die to-morrow how ready are you: and with what terror will your ſouls go out of your bodies? And do you yet loiter? Why conſider, God ſtandeth all this while waiting your leiſure: his patience beareth: his juſtice forbeareth: his mercy intreateth you: Chriſt ſtandeth offering you his blood and merits: you may have him freely, and life with him: the Spirit is perſuading: conſcience is accuſing and urging you: miniſters are praying for you and calling upon you: Satan ſtands waiting, when Juſtice will cut off your lives that he may have you: this is your time: now or never. What! had you rather loſe heaven than your profits or pleaſures?

Had you rather burn in hell, then repent on earth? Had you rather howl and roar there, than pray day and night for mercy here? Or have devils your tormentors, than Chriſt your governor? Will you renounce your part in God and glory rather than renounce your ſins? Do you think a holy life too much for heaven: or too dear a courſe to prevent endleſs miſery? O friends, what do you think of theſe things? God hath made you men, and endued you with reaſon: do you renounce your reaſon where you ſhould chiefly uſe it? In this manner you muſt deal roundly and ſeriouſly with men. Alas, it is not a few dull words, between jeſt and earneſt, between ſleep and waking, as it were, that will waken an ignorant, dead-hearted ſinner! When a dull hearer and a dull ſpeaker meet together, a dead heart, and a dead exhortation; it is unlike to have a lively effect. If a man fall down into a ſwoon, you will not ſtand trifling with him, but lay hands on him preſently, and ſnatch him up, and rub him, and call aloud to him: if a houſe be on fire, you will not in a cold ſtrain go to tell your neighbour of it, or make an oration of the nature and danger of fire; but you will run out and cry, Fire! Fire! Matters of moment muſt be ſeriouſly dealt with. To tell a man of his ſins ſo ſoftly as *Eli* did his ſons, or reprove him ſo gently as *Jehoſaphat* did *Ahab*, *Let not the King ſay ſo*, doth uſually as much harm as good. I am perſuaded the very manner of ſome mens reproof and exhortation, hath hardened many a ſinner in the way of deſtruction. To tell them of ſin, or of heaven or hell, in a dull, eaſy, careleſs language, doth make men think you are not in good earneſt; but ſcarce think yourſelves ſuch things are true. O Sirs, deal with ſin as ſin, and ſpeak of heaven and hell as they are, and not as if you were in jeſt. I confeſs I have failed much in this myſelf, the Lord lay it not to my charge. Unwillingneſs to diſpleaſe men, makes us undo them.

6. Yet leſt you run into extremes, I adviſe you to do it with diſcretion. Be as ſerious as

you can but yet with wiſdom. And eſpecially you muſt be wiſe in theſe things following.

1. In chooſing the fitteſt ſeaſon for your exhortation; not to deal with men when they are in a paſſion, or where they will take it for a diſgrace. Men ſhould obſerve, when ſinners are fitteſt to hear inſtructions. Phyſic muſt not be given at all times, but in ſeaſon. It is an excellent example that *Paul* giveth us, Gal. ii. 2. He communicateth the goſpel to them, yet privately to them of reputation, leſt he ſhould run in vain. Some men would take this to be a ſinful complying with their corruption, to yield ſo far to their pride and baſhfulneſs, as to teach them only in private, becauſe they would be aſhamed to own the truth in public: but *Paul* knew how great a hindrance mens reputation is to their entertaining of the truth, and that the remedy muſt not only be fitted to the diſeaſe, but alſo to the ſtrength of the patient, and that in ſo doing, the phyſician is not guilty of favouring the diſeaſe but is praiſe-worthy for taking the right way to cure. Means will work eaſily if you take the opportunity; when the earth is ſoft, the plow will enter. Take a man when he is under affliction, or in the houſe of mourning, or newly ſtirred by ſome moving ſermon, and then ſet it home, and you may do him good. Chriſtian faithfulneſs doth require us, not only to do good when it falls in our way, but to watch for opportunities.

2. Be wiſe alſo in ſuiting your exhortation to the quality and temper of the perſon. All meats are not for all ſtomachs: one man will vomit that up which another will digeſt. 1. If it be a learned, or ingenious rational man, you muſt deal more by convincing arguments, and leſs by paſſionate perſuaſions. 2. If it be one that is both ignorant and ſtupid, their is need of both. 3. If one that is convinced, but not converted, you muſt uſe moſt thoſe means that rouſe the affections. 4. If they be obſtinate and ſecure, you muſt reprove

them ſharply. 5. If they be of timorous tender natures, they muſt be tenderly dealt with. All cannot bear that rough dealing as ſome can. Love, and plainneſs, and ſerioufneſs take with all: but words of terror ſome ſcarce can bear.

3. You muſt be wiſe alſo in uſing the apteſt expreſſions. Many a miniſter doth deliver moſt excellent matter in ſuch a harſh and unſeeming language that it makes the hearers loathe the food that they ſhould live by, and laugh at a ſermon that might make them quake: eſpecially if they be men of curious ears, and carnal hearts, and have more wit and parts than the ſpeaker. And ſo it is in private *exhortations* as well as public: if you clothe the moſt amiable truth in the ſordid rags of unbeſeeming language, you will make men diſdain it though it be the offspring of God, and of the higheſt nature.

4. Let all your reproofs and exhortations be backed with the authority of God. Let the ſinner be convinced that you ſpeak not from yourſelves or of your own head. Shew them the very words of ſcripture for what you ſay: preſs them with the truth and authority of God: aſk them, Whether they believe that this is his word, and that his word is true. So much of God as appeareth in our words, ſo much will they take. The voice of man is contemptible; but the voice of God is awful and terrible. Be ſure therefore to make them know that you ſpeak nothing but what God hath ſpoken.

5. You muſt alſo be frequent with men in this duty of *exhortation*; it is not once or twice that uſually will prevail. If God himſelf muſt be conſtantly ſolicited, as if importunity could prevail with him when nothing elſe can; and therefore requires us *always to pray, and not to faint*: the ſame courſe, no doubt, will be moſt prevailing with men. Therefore we are commanded, *To exhort one another daily*, and *with all long-*

long ſuffering. The fire is not always brought out of the flint at one ſtroke: nor mens affections kindled at the firſt exhortation. And if they were, yet if they be not followed, they will ſoon grow cold again. Weary out ſinners with your loving and earneſt intreaties; follow them, and give them no reſt in their ſin. This is true charity, and this is the way to ſave mens ſouls: and a courſe that will afford you comfort upon a review.

6. Strive to bring all your exhortation to an iſſue: ſtick not in the work done, but look after the ſucceſs. I have long obſerved it in miniſters and private men, that if they ſpeak never ſo convincing words, and yet all their care is over when they have done their ſpeech, pretending that having done their duty, they leave the iſſue to God, theſe men ſeldom proſper in their labours; but thoſe whoſe very heart is ſet upon the work and that long to ſee it take for the hearers converſion, and uſe to enquire how it ſpeeds, God uſually bleſſeth their labours, though more weak. Labour therefore to drive all your ſpeeches at the deſired iſſue. If you are reproving ſin, ceaſe not till (if it may be) you have got the ſinner to promiſe you to leave it, and to avoid the occaſions of it: if you are exhorting to a duty, urge the party to promiſe you preſently to ſet upon it. If you would draw them to *Chriſt*, leave them not till you have made them confeſs, that their preſent ſtate is miſerable and not to be reſted in; and till they have ſubſcribed to the neceſſity of a change; and promiſed you to fall cloſe to the uſe of means. Oh that all chriſtians would be perſuaded to take this courſe with all their neighbours that are yet enſlaved to ſin, and ſtrangers to *Chriſt*.

7. Laſtly, Be ſure your example exhort as well as your words. Let them ſee you conſtant in all the duties you perſuade them to: let them ſee in your lives that excellency above the world, which you perſuade them to in your ſpeeches. Let them

ſee by your conſtant labours for heaven, that you indeed believe what you would have them believe.

And thus I have opened to you the firſt and great part of this duty, conſiſting in private exhortation, for the helping of poor ſouls to this Reſt, that have yet no title to it; and I have ſhewed you alſo the manner how to perform it. I will now ſpeak a little of the next part.

1. Beſides the duty of private admonition, you muſt do your utmoſt endeavours to help men to profit by the public ordinances. And to that end, firſt, do your endeavours for the procuring of faithful miniſters where they are wanting. This is God's ordinary means of converting and ſaving. "How ſhall they hear without a preacher?" Not only for your own ſakes therefore, but for the poor miſerable ones about you, do all you can to bring this to paſs. Improve all your intereſt and diligence to this end. Riſe, and go and ſeek, and make friends till you prevail. Who knoweth how many ſouls may bleſs you, who have been converted by the miniſtry which you have procured? It is a higher and nobler work of charity, than if you gave all that you have to relieve their bodies.

How ſmall a matter were it (and yet how excellent a work) for every gentleman of means in *England*, to cull out ſome one or two, or more poor boys in the country ſchools, who are the choiceſt wits, and of the moſt pious diſpoſitions, who are poor and unable to proceed in learning; and to maintain them till they are fit for the miniſtry? It were but keeping a few ſuperfluous attendants the leſs, if they had hearts to it, it were eaſily ſpared out of their rich apparel, or ſuperfluous diet; I dare ſay, they would not be ſorry for it, when they come to their reckoning: one ſumptuous feaſt, or one coſtly ſuit of apparel, would maintain a poor boy a year or two at the univerſity, who perhaps might come to have more

more true worth in him, than many a glittering lord, and to do God more ſervice in his church, than ever they did with all their eſtates and power.

2. And when you enjoy the bleſſing of the goſpel, you muſt yet uſe your utmoſt diligence to help poor ſouls to receive the fruit of it. To which end you muſt draw them conſtantly to hear and attend it: remind them often of what they have heard: draw them, if it be poſſible, to repeat it in their families; if that cannot be, then draw them to come to others that do repeat it; that ſo it may not die in the hearing. The very drawing of men into the company and acquaintance of the good man, beſides the benefit they have by his endeavours, is of ſingular uſe to the recovery of their ſouls. It is a means to take off prejudice, by confuting the world's ſlanders of the ways and people of God. Uſe therefore often to meet together, beſides the more public meeting in the congregation: not to vend any unſound opinions, nor at the time of public worſhip; nor yet to ſeparate from the church whereof you are members; but the work which I would have you meet about, is this, To repeat together the word which you have heard in public; to pour out joint prayers for the church and yourſelves; join in cheerful ſinging the praiſes of God: to open your ſcruples, and doubts, and fears, and get reſolution; to quicken each other in love and heavenly-mindedneſs, or holy walking: and all this not as a ſeparated church, but as a part of the church more diligent than the reſt in redeeming time, and helping the ſouls of each other heavenward.

3. One thing more I adviſe: if you would have ſouls ſaved by the ordinance, Labour ſtill to keep the ordinance and miniſtry in eſteem. No man will be much wrought on by that which he deſpiſeth. I ſhall confirm you herein, not in my own words, but in his that I know you dare not diſregard, 1 Theſſ. v. 12, 13. "Wherefore

comfort yourſelves together, and edify one another, even as ye alſo do: and we beſeech you brethren to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admoniſh you, and to eſteem them very highly in love for their works ſake; and be at peace among yourſelves. Obey them that have the rule over you, ſubmit yourſelves: for they watch for your ſouls, as thoſe that muſt give an account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you, Heb. xiii. 17.

Thus you ſee part of your duty for the ſalvation of others.

But where ſhall we find the man, that ſetteth himſelf to it with all his might, and that hath ſet his heart upon the ſouls of his brethren, that they may be ſaved?

Let us here a little enquire, what may be the cauſes of the groſs neglect of this duty, that the hindrances being diſcovered, may the more eaſily be overcome.

1. One hindrance is, Men's own ſinfulneſs and guiltineſs. They have not been raviſhed themſelves with the heavenly delights: how then ſhould they draw others to ſeek them? They have not felt the wickedneſs of their own natures, nor their loſt condition, nor their need of Chriſt, nor felt the renewing work of the Spirit: how then can they diſcover theſe to others? Oh that this were not the caſe of many a learned preacher in *England!* and the cauſe why they preach ſo frozenly! Men alſo are guilty themſelves of the ſins they ſhould reprove; and this ſtops their mouths and maketh them aſhamed to reprove.

2. Another hindrance is, A ſecret infidelity prevailing in men's hearts: alas, ſirs, we do not ſure believe mens miſery; ſure we do not believe the threatnings of God are true! Did we verily believe that all the unregenerate and unholy ſhall be eternally tormented, Oh, how could we hold our tongues when we are among the unregenerate!

How

How could we chuſe but burſt out in tears when we look them in the face, as the prophet did when he looked upon *Hazael?* eſpecially when they are our kindred or friends, that are near and dear to us? Thus doth ſecret unbelief conſume the vigour of each grace and duty. Oh Chriſtians, if you did verily believe that your poor neighbour, or wife, or huſband, or child ſhould certainly lie for ever in the flames of hell, except they be thoroughly changed, before death doth ſnatch them hence, would not this make you caſt off all diſcouragements, and lay at them day and night till they were perſuaded? If you were ſure that any of your dear friends that are dead, were now in hell, and perſuaded that repentance would get him out again, would not you perſuade him day and night if he were in hearing? And why ſhould you not do as much then to prevent it, while he is in your hearing, but that you do not believe God's word that ſpeaks the danger? Oh were it not for this curſed unbelief, our own ſouls and our neighbours would gain more by us than they do.

3. This faithful dealing with men for their ſalvation, is hindered alſo by the want of compaſſion to men's ſouls. We are hard-hearted and cruel toward the miſerable; and therefore (as the Prieſt and the Levite did by the wounded man) we look on them and paſs by. O what tender hearts could endure to look upon a poor, blind, forlorn ſinner, wounded by ſin, and captivated by Satan, and never once open their mouths for his recovery? What though he be ſilent, and do not deſire thy help? Yet his miſery cries aloud. Miſery is the moſt effectual ſuitor to one that is compaſſionate. If God had not heard the cry of our miſeries before he heard the cry of our prayers, and been moved by his own pity before he was moved by our importunity, we might have long enough continued the ſlaves of Satan. Alas, what pitiful ſights do we daily ſee? The ignorant, the profane, the neglecters of Chriſt and their ſouls:—Their ſores are open and viſible to all; and yet, do we not pity

them? You will pray to God for them, in cuſtomary duties, that God would open the eyes, and turn the hearts of your friends and neighbours: and why do you not endeavour their converſion if you deſire it? And if you do not deſire it, why do you aſk it? Doth not your negligence convince you of hypocriſy in your prayers, and of abuſing the moſt High God with your deceitful words? Your neighbours are near you, your friends are in the houſe with you, you eat, drink, and work, and walk, and talk with them, and yet you ſay little or nothing to them. Why do you not pray them to conſider and return, as well as pray God to convert and turn them? Have you as oft begged of them to think on their ways, and to reform, as you have taken on you to beg of God that they may ſo do? What if you ſhould ſee your neighbour fallen into a pit, and you ſhould preſently fall down on your knees, and pray God to help him out, but would neither put forth your hand to help him, nor once perſuade or direct him to help himſelf, would not any man cenſure you to be cruel and hypocritical? What the Holy Ghoſt ſaith of mens bodily miſeries, I may ſay much more of the miſery of their ſouls; "If any man ſeeth his brother in need, and ſhutteth up his compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" The charity of our ignorant forefathers may riſe up in judgment againſt us, and condemn us: they would give all their eſtates almoſt, for ſo many maſſes or pardons, to deliver the ſouls of their friends from a feigned purgatory; and we will not ſo much as admoniſh and entreat them, to ſave them from the certain flames of hell.

4. Another hindrance is, a baſe man-pleaſing diſpoſition that is in us. We are ſo loth to diſpleaſe men, and ſo deſirous to keep in credit and favour with them, that it makes us neglect our own duty. A fooliſh phyſician he is, and a moſt unfaithful friend, that will let a ſick man die for fear of troubling him. And cruel wretches are we to our friends that will rather ſuffer them to go quick-

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ly to hell, than we will anger them or hazard our reputation with them. If they did but fall in a ſwoon, we would rub them and pinch them, and never ſtick at hurting them. If they were diſtracted, we would bind them with chains, and we would pleaſe them in nothing that tended to their hurt. And yet when they are beſide themſelves in point of ſalvation, and in their madneſs poſting on to damnation, we ſhall not ſtop them for fear of diſpleaſing them. *How can theſe men be Chriſtians, that love the praiſe and favour of men more than the favour of God!* John xii. 43. *For if they yet ſeek to pleaſe men, they are no longer the ſervants of Chriſt*, Gal. i. 10. To win them indeed we muſt become all things to all men: but to pleaſe them to their deſtruction, and let them periſh, that we may keep our credit with them, is a courſe ſo baſe and barbarouſly cruel, that he that hath the face of a chriſtian ſhould abhor it.

5. Another common hindrance is, A ſinful Baſhfulneſs. When we ſhould labour to make men aſhamed of their ſins, we are ourſelves aſhamed of our duties. May not theſe ſinners condemn us, when they will not bluſh to ſwear or be drunk, and we bluſh to tell them of it, and diſſuade them from it? Sinners will boaſt of their ſins, and ſhew them in the open ſtreets: and ſhall not we be as bold in drawing them from ſin? Not that I would have inferiors forget their diſtance in admoniſhing their ſuperiors; but do it with all humility, and ſubmiſſion, and reſpect. But yet I would much leſs have them forget their duty to God and their friends, be they never ſo much their ſuperiors. It is a thing that muſt be done. Baſhfulneſs is unſeemly in caſes of flat neceſſity. And indeed it is not a work to be aſhamed of; to obey God in perſuading men from their ſins to Chriſt, and helping to ſave their ſouls, is not a buſineſs for a man to bluſh at. Yet alas, what abundance of ſouls have been neglected through the prevailing of this ſin? Even the moſt of us are heinouſly guilty in this point. Reader, is not this thy own caſe? Hath

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not thy conſcience told thee of thy duty many a time, and put thee on ſpeaking to poor ſinners, leſt they periſh? and yet thou haſt been aſhamed to open thy mouth to them, and ſo let them alone to ſink or ſwim; believe me, thou wilt ere long be aſhamed of this ſhame: O read theſe words of Chriſt and tremble: "He that is aſhamed of me and of my words, before this adulterous generation, of him will the Son of man be aſhamed before his Father and the angels."

6. With many alſo Pride is a great impediment. If it were to ſpeak to a great man, they would do it, ſo it would not diſpleaſe him. But to go among a company of ignorant beggars, or mean perſons, and to ſit with them in a ſmoaky, naſty cottage, and there to exhort them from day to day; where is the perſon that will do it?—Many will much rejoice if they have been inſtruments of converting a gentleman (and they have good cauſe) but for the common multitude, they look not after them: as if God were a reſpecter of the perſons of the rich, or the ſouls of all were not alike to him. Alas, theſe men little conſider how long Chriſt did ſtoop to us! When the God of glory comes down in fleſh to worms, and goeth preaching up and down among them from city to city! Not the ſilliеſt woman that he thought too low to confer with: few rich and noble, and wiſe are called. It is the poor that receive the glad tidings of the goſpel.

Object. O but ſays one, I am of ſo weak parts, that I am unable to manage an exhortation; eſpecially to men of ſtrong parts and underſtanding.

I *anſwer*, 1. Set thoſe upon the work who are more able. 2. Yet do not think that thou art ſo excuſed thyſelf, but uſe faithfully that ability which thou haſt; not in teaching thoſe of whom thou ſhouldeſt learn, but in inſtructing thoſe that are more ignorant than thyſelf, and in exhorting thoſe that are negligent in the things which they do know,

know. If you cannot ſpeak well yourſelf, yet you can tell them what God ſpeaketh in his word. It is not the excellency of ſpeech that winneth the ſouls; but the authority of God manifeſted by that ſpeech, and the power of his word in the mouth of the inſtructor. A weak woman may tell what God ſaith in the plain paſſages of the word, as well as a learned man. If you cannot preach to them, yet you can ſay, Thus it is written. One of mean parts may remind the wiſeſt of their duty when they forget it.

Object. It is my ſuperior: and is it fit for me to teach or reprove my betters? Muſt the wife teach the huſband, of whom the Scripture biddeth them learn? or muſt the child teach the parents, whoſe duty it is to teach them?

I *anſwer*, 1. It is fit that huſbands ſhould be able to teach their wives, and parents to teach their children; and God expecteth they ſhould be ſo, and therefore commandeth the inferiors to learn of them. But if they through their negligence diſable themſelves, or through their wickedneſs bring their ſouls into ſuch miſery, then it is themſelves, and not you, that break God's order, by bringing themſelves into diſability and miſery.

Matters of mere order and manners muſt be diſpenſed with in caſes of flat neceſſity. Though it were your miniſter, you muſt teach him in ſuch a caſe. It is the part of parents to provide for their children, and not children for their parents: and yet if the parents fall into want, muſt not the children relieve them? It is the part of the huſband to diſpoſe of the affairs of the family and eſtate: and yet if he be ſick and beſides himſelf, muſt not the wife do it? The rich ſhould relieve the poor: but if the rich fall into beggary they muſt be relieved themſelves. It is the work of a phyſician to look to the health of others; and yet if he fall ſick, ſomebody muſt help him. So muſt the meaneſt ſervant admoniſh his maſter, and the child his parent, and the wife her huſband, and

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the people their miniſters, in caſes of neceſſity. Yet Secondly, let me give you theſe two cautions here,

1. That you do not pretend neceſſity when there is none, out of a mere deſire of teaching. There is ſcarce a more certain diſcovery of a proud heart, than to be more deſirous to teach than to learn; eſpecially towards thoſe that are fitter to teach us.

2. And when the neceſſity of your ſuperiors doth call for your advice, yet do it with all poſſible humility, modeſty, and meekneſs. Let them diſcern your reverence and ſubmiſſion in the humble manner of your addreſſes to them. Let them perceive that you do it not out of a mere teaching humour, or proud ſelf conceitedneſs. If a wife ſhould tell her huſband of ſin in a maſterly, railing language: or if a ſervant reprove his maſter, or a child his father in a ſaucy way, what good could be expected from ſuch a reproof? But if they ſhould meekly and humbly open to him his ſin and danger, and entreat him to bear with him what God commandeth, and if they could, by tears teſtify their ſenſe of his caſe: what father, or maſter, or huſband could take this ill?

Object. But ſome may ſay, this will make us all preachers, and cauſe all to break over the bounds of their callings.

Anſwer, 1. This is not taking a paſtoral charge of ſouls, nor making an office or calling of it, as preachers do.

2. And in the way of our callings, every good chriſtian is a teacher, and hath a charge of his neighbour's ſoul. Let it be only the voice of a *Cain* to ſay, *Am I my brother's keeper?* I would one of theſe men, that are ſo loath that private men ſhould teach them, to tell me, What if a man fall down in a ſwoon in the ſtreets, though it be your father or ſuperior, would you not take him

him up preſently, and uſe all means to recover him? Or would you let him lie and die, and ſay it is the work of a phyſician, and not mine; I will not invade the phyſician's calling. In two caſes every man is a phyſician; Firſt, in caſe of neceſſity, and when a phyſician cannot be had: and Secondly, in caſe the hurt ſhould be ſo ſmall, that every man can do as well as a phyſician. And in the ſame two caſes, every man muſt be a teacher.

Object. Some will farther object, to put off this duty, that the party is ſo ignorant or ſtupid, or careleſs, or rooted in ſin, and hath been ſo often exhorted in vain, that there is no hope.

I anſwer, How know you when there is no hope? Cannot God yet cure him? And have not many as far gone been cured? Should not a merciful phyſician uſe means while there is life? And is it not inhuman cruelty in you to give up your friend to the devil as hopeleſs, upon mere backwardneſs to your duty, or upon groundleſs diſcouragements? What if you had been ſo given up yourſelves when you were ignorant?

Object. But we muſt not caſt pearls before ſwine, nor give that which is holy to dogs.

I anſwer, That is but a favourable diſpenſation of Chriſt for your own ſafety. When you are in danger of being torn in pieces, Chriſt would have you forbear; but what is that to you, that are in no ſuch danger? As long as they will hear, you have encouragement to ſpeak, and may not caſt them off as contemptuous ſwine.

Objection. O but it is a friend that I have all my dependance on: and by telling him of his ſin and miſery, I may loſe his love, and ſo be undone.

I anſwer, Sure no man that hath the faith of a chriſtian, will for ſhame own ſuch an objection as this? yet, I doubt, it often prevaileth in the heart.

heart. Is his love more to be valued than his ſafety? or thy own benefit by him, than the ſalvation of his ſoul? or wilt thou connive at his damnation, becauſe he is thy friend? Is that thy beſt requital of his friendſhip? Hadſt thou rather he ſhould burn for ever in hell, than thou ſhouldſt loſe his favour, or the maintenance thou haſt from him?

To conclude this uſe, That I may prevail with every ſoul that feareth God, to uſe their utmoſt diligence to help all about them to this bleſſed Reſt, let me entreat you to conſider theſe following motives.

1. Conſider, Nature teacheth the communicating of good, and grace doth eſpecially diſpoſe the ſoul thereto; the neglect therefore of this work, is a ſin both againſt nature and grace.

Would you not think thoſe men and women unnatural, that would let their children or neighbours famiſh in the ſtreets, while they have proviſion in hand? And is not he more unnatural, that will let his children or neighbours periſh eternally, and will not open his mouth to ſave them? Certainly this is moſt barbarous cruelty. We account an unmerciful, cruel man, a very monſter to be abhorred of all. Many vicious men are too much loved in the world, but a cruel man is abhorred of all. Now that it may appear to you what a cruel thing this neglect of ſouls is, do but conſider theſe two things. Firſt, how great a work it is. Secondly, how ſmall a matter it is that thou refuſeſt to do for the accompliſhing ſo great a work. Firſt, it is to ſave thy brother from eternal flames, that he may not there lie roaring in endleſs torments. It is to bring him to the everlaſting Reſt, where he may live in inconceivable happineſs with God. Secondly, and what is it that you ſhould do to help him herein? Why, it is to perſuade him, and lay open to him his ſin, and his duty, his miſery, and the remedy, till you have made him willing to yield to the offers and commands of Chriſt. And is this

this ſo great a matter to do, for the attaining ſuch a bleſſed end? Is not the ſoul of huſband, or wife, or child, or neighbour worth a few words? It is worth this, or it is worth nothing. If they lie dying in the ſtreets, and a few words would ſave their lives, would not every man ſay, he was a cruel wretch that would let them periſh, rather than ſpeak to them? Even the covetous hypocrite that James reproveth would give a few words to the poor, and ſay, "Go and be warmed, and be clothed." What a barbarous, unmerciful wretch then art thou, that wilt not vouchſafe a few words of ſerious, ſober admonition, to ſave the ſoul of thy neighbour or friend? Cruelty and unmercifulneſs to men's bodies, is a moſt damnable ſin; but to their ſouls much more, as the ſoul is of greater worth than the body, and as eternity is of greater moment than this ſhort time.

Alas! do you not ſee or feel what caſe their ſouls are in, when they are in hell, for want of your faithful admonition. Little know you what many a ſoul may now be feeling, who have been your neighbours and acquaintance, and died in their ſins, on whom you never beſtowed one hour's ſober advice for preventing their unhappineſs. If you knew their miſery, you would now do more to bring them out of hell: but alas, it is too late; you ſhould have done it while they were with you. As one ſaid of phyſicians, "That they were the moſt happy men, becauſe all their good deeds and cures were ſeen above ground to their praiſe, but all their miſtakes and neglects were buried out of ſight." So I may ſay to you, many a neglect of yours to the ſouls about you, may now be buried with thoſe ſouls in hell, out of your ſight, and therefore now it doth much trouble you; but alas they feel it, though you feel it not. *Jeremiah* cried out, "My bowels, my bowels, I cannot hold my peace," becauſe of the temporal deſtruction of his people: and do not our bowels yearn? And can we hold our peace at mens eternal deſtruction?

2. Conſider

2. Consider, What a rate Christ did value souls at, and what he hath done towards the salvation of them; he thought them worth his blood, and shall not we think them worth the breath of our mouths? Will you not do a little, where he hath done so much?

3. Consider, What a deal of guilt this neglect doth lay upon thy soul. First, thou art guilty of the murder and damnation of all those souls whom thou dost neglect. He that standeth by, and seeth a man in a pit, and will not pull him out if he can doth drown him. And he that standeth by while thieves rob him, or murderers kill him, and will not help him if he can, is accessary to the fact. And so he that will silently suffer men to damn their souls, or will let Satan and the world deceive them, and not offer to help them, will certainly be judged guilty of damning them. And is not this a most dreadful consideration? O sirs, how many souls then have every one of us been guilty of damning! What a number of our neighbours and acquaintance are dead, in whom we discerned no signs of sanctification, and we never once plainly told them of it, or how to be recovered! If you had been the cause of burning a man's house through your negligence, or of undoing him or destroying his body, how would it trouble you as long as you lived? If you had but killed a man unadvisedly, it would much disquiet you. We have known those that have been guilty of murder, that could never sleep quietly after, nor have one comfortable day, their own consciences did so vex and torment them. O what a heart must thou have, that hast been guilty of murdering such a multitude of precious souls? Remember this, when thou lookest thy friend or carnal neighbour in the face; and think with thyself, can I find in my heart, through my silence and negligence, to be guilty of his everlasting burning in hell? Methinks such a thought should even untie the tongue of the dumb.

2. And

2. And as you are guilty of their periſhing, ſo are you of every ſin which in the mean time they commit. If they were converted, they would break off their courſe of ſinning: and if you did your duty, you know not but they might be converted. As he that is guilty of man's drunkenneſs, is guilty of all the ſins which that drunkenneſs doth cauſe him to commit; ſo he that is guilty of a man's continuing unregenerate, is alſo guilty of the ſins of his unregeneracy. How many curſes and oaths, and other ſins of a moſt heinous nature are many of you guilty of, that little think of it? You that take much pains for your own ſouls, and ſeem fearful of ſinning, would take it ill of one that ſhould tell you that you are guilty of weekly, or daily whoredoms and drunkenneſs, and ſwearing, and lying? And yet it is too true, even beyond all denial, by your neglect of helping thoſe who do commit them.

3. You are guilty alſo of all thoſe judgments which thoſe mens ſins bring upon the town or country where they live. I know you are not ſuch atheiſts, but you believe it is God that ſendeth ſickneſs, and famine, and war; and alſo that it is only ſin that moveth him to his indignation. What doubt then is there, but you are the cauſe of judgments, who do not ſtrive againſt thoſe ſins which cauſe them? God hath ſtaid long in patience, to ſee if any would deal plainly with the ſinners of the times, and ſo free their own ſouls from the guilt: but when he ſeeth that there is none, but all become guilty; no wonder then if he lay the judgment upon all. We have all ſeen the drunkards, and heard the ſwearers in our ſtreets, and we would not ſpeak to them: we have all lived in the midſt of an ignorant, worldly, unholy people; and we have not ſpoke to them with earneſtneſs, plainneſs, and love; no wonder then if God ſpeak in his wrath both to them and us. *Eli* did not commit the ſin himſelf, and yet he ſpeaketh ſo coldly againſt it, that he muſt bear the puniſhment. God locked up the clouds

clouds becauſe we have ſhut up our mouths. The earth is grown as hard as iron to us, becauſe we have hardened our hearts againſt our miſerable neighbours. The cries of the poor for bread are loud, becauſe our cries againſt ſin have been ſo low. Sickneſſes run apace from houſe to houſe, and ſweep away the poor unprepared inhabitants, becauſe we ſwept not out the ſin that breedeth them. As Chriſt ſaid in another caſe, Luke xix. 40, *If theſe ſhould hold their peace, the ſtones would ſpeak*: ſo becauſe we held our peace at the ignorance, ungodlineſs and wickedneſs of our places, therefore do theſe plagues and judgments ſpeak.

4. Conſider, what a thing it will be, to look upon your poor friends in thoſe flames, and to think that your neglect was a great cauſe of it? and that there was a time when you might have done much to prevent it. If you ſhould there periſh with them, it would be no ſmall aggravation of your torment: if you be in heaven, it would ſure be a ſad thought, were it poſſible that any ſorrow could dwell there, to hear a multitude of poor ſouls there to cry out for ever. O if you would but have told me plainly of my ſin and danger, and dealt roundly with me, I might have eſcaped all this torment, and been now in Reſt! O what a ſad voice will this be!

5. Conſider, how diligent are the enemies of theſe poor ſouls to draw them to hell? and if nobody be diligent in helping them to heaven, what is like to become of them? The devil is tempting them day and night: their inward luſts are ſtill working and withdrawing them; the fleſh is ſtill pleading for its delights and profits: their old companions are ready to entice them to ſin, and to diſgrace God's ways and people to them; and to contradict the doctrine of Chriſt that ſhould ſave them, and to increaſe their diſlike of holineſs. Seducing teachers are exceeding diligent in ſowing tares, and in drawing off the unſtable from the way to life: and ſhall a ſeducer be ſo unwearied in

in proſelyting poor ungrounded ſouls to his fancies? And ſhall not a ſound chriſtian be much more unwearied in labouring to win men to Chriſt and life?

6. Conſider, the neglect of this doth very deeply wound when conſcience is awakened. When a man comes to die. Conſcience will aſk him, What good haſt thou done in thy life-time? The ſaving of ſouls is the greateſt good; what haſt thou done towards this? How many haſt thou dealt faithfully with? I have often obſerved, that the conſciences of dying men, very much wound them for this omiſſion. For my own part (to tell you my experience) whenever I have been near death, my conſcience hath accuſed me more for this than for any ſin: it would bring every ignorant, prophane neighbour to my remembrance to whom I never made known their danger: it would tell me, thou ſhouldſt have gone to them in private, and told them plainly of their deſperate danger, without baſhfulneſs or daubing though it had been when thou ſhouldſt have eaten or ſlept, if thou hadſt no other time: conſcience would remind me, how at ſuch a time, or ſuch a time, I was in company with the ignorant, or was riding by the way with a wilful ſinner, and had a fit opportunity to have dealt with him, but did not: or at leaſt, did it by halves, and to little purpoſe. The Lord grant I may better obey conſcience hereafter while I live and have time, that it may have leſs to accuſe me of at death.

7. Conſider, laſtly, the happy conſequences of this work, where it is faithfully done; to name ſome:

1. You may be inſtrumental in that bleſſed work of ſaving ſouls, a work that Chriſt came down and died for, a work that the angels of God rejoice in; for ſaith the Holy Ghoſt, *If any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know, that he which converteth the ſinner from the error of his way, ſhall ſave a ſoul from death, and ſhall hide a multitude of ſins*, James v. 19, 20. And how can God more highly

highly honour you, than to make you inſtruments in ſo great a work?

2. Such ſouls will bleſs you here and hereafter. They may be angry with you at firſt; but if your words ſucceed, they will bleſs the day that ever they knew you, and bleſs God that ſent you to ſpeak to them.

3. It bringeth much advantage to yourſelves: Firſt, it will increaſe your grace, both as it is a courſe that God will bleſs, and it is an acting of them in thus perſuading others: he that will not let you loſe a cup of water which is given for him, will not let you loſe theſe greater works of charity; beſides, thoſe that have practiſed this duty, muſt find by experience that they never go on more proſperouſly towards heaven, than when they do moſt to help others thither with them. It is not here as with worldly treaſure, the more you give away, the leſs you have: but the more you give, the more you have: the ſetting forth Chriſt in his fulneſs to others, will warm your own hearts: the opening the evil and the danger of ſin to others, will increaſe your hatred of it. Secondly, it will increaſe your glory as well as your grace, both as a duty which God will reward, (*For thoſe that convert many to righteouſneſs, ſhall ſhine as the ſtars for ever and ever*, Dan. xii. 3.) and alſo as we ſhall there behold them in heaven, and be their aſſociates in bleſſedneſs, whom God made us here the inſtruments to convert. Thirdly, however it will give us much peace of conſcience, whether we ſucceed or not, to think that we were faithful, and did our beſt to ſave them, and that we are clear from the blood of all men. Fourthly, Beſides that is a work that if it ſucceed, doth exceedingly rejoice an honeſt heart: he that has any ſenſe of God's honour, or the leaſt affection to the ſoul of his brother, muſt needs rejoice much at his converſion, whoſoever be the inſtrument, but eſpecially when God makes ourſelves the means of ſo bleſſed a work.

For

For my own part, it is an unſpeakable comfort to me, that God hath made me an inſtrument for the recovering of ſo many from bodily diſeaſes, and ſaving their natural lives: but all this is nothing to the comfort I have in the ſucceſs of my labours, in the converſion and confirmation of ſouls; it is ſo great a joy to me, that it drowneth the painfulneſs of my daily duties, and the trouble of my daily languiſhing and bodily griefs, and maketh all theſe, with all oppoſitions and difficulties in my work to be eaſy: and of all the perſonal mercies that ever I received, next to his love in Chriſt to my ſoul, I moſt joyfully bleſs him for the plenteous ſucceſs of my endeavours upon others: O what fruits then might I have ſeen, if I had been more faithful, and plied the work in private and public as I ought! I know we have need to be very jealous of our deceitful hearts in this point, leſt our rejoicing ſhould come from our pride. Naturally we would have every man to be in the place of God, and have the praiſe of every good work aſcribed to ourſelves: but yet to imitate our Father in goodneſs, and to rejoice in that degree we attain to, is the part of every child of God. I tell you therefore to perſuade you from my own experience, that if you did but know what a joyful thing it is to be an inſtrument for the ſaving of ſouls, you would ſet upon it preſently, and follow it night and day through the greateſt diſcouragements and reſiſtance.

And thus I have ſhewed you what ſhould perſuade you to this duty. Let me now conclude with a word of intreaty: Firſt to all the godly in general, Secondly to ſome above others in particular.

CHAP. XII.

An Advice to ſome more particularly to help others to this Reſt.

UP then every man that hath a tongue, and is a ſervant of Chriſt, and do ſomething of this your maſter's work; why hath he given you a tongue but to ſpeak in his ſervice? And how can you ſerve him more eminently, than in the ſaving of ſouls? He that will pronounce you bleſſed at the laſt day, and ſentence you to the kingdom prepared for you, becauſe you fed him, and clothed him, and viſited him, in his members, will ſurely pronounce you bleſſed for ſo great a work as the bringing over of ſouls to his kingdom. He that ſaith, "The poor you have always with you," hath left the ungodly always with you, that you might ſtill have matter to exerciſe your charity upon. O if you have the hearts of chriſtians, or of men in you, let them yearn towards your poor, ignorant, ungodly neighbours! alas, there is but a ſtep betwixt them and death, and hell; many hundred diſeaſes are waiting ready to ſeize them, and if they die unregenerate, they are loſt for ever. Have you hearts of rock, that cannot pity men in ſuch a caſe? If you believe not the word of God, how are you chriſtians yourſelves? If you do but believe it, why do you not beſtir you to help others? Do you not care who is damned, ſo you be ſaved? If ſo, you have as much cauſe to pity your ownſelves; for it is a frame of ſpirit inconſiſtent with grace: ſhould you not rather ſay, as the lepers of Samaria, Is it not a day of glad tidings, and we ſit ſtill, and hold our peace? Hath God had ſo much mercy on you, and will you have no mercy on your poor neighbours? You need not go far to find objects for your pity: look but into the ſtreets, or into the next houſe to you, and you will probably find ſome.

Have

Have you never a neighbour that ſets his heart below, and neglecteth eternity? What bleſſed place do you live in, where there is none ſuch? If there be not ſome of them in thy own family, it is well; and yet art thou ſilent? Doſt thou live cloſe by them, or meet them in the ſtreets, or labour with them, or travel with them, or ſit ſtill and talk with them, and ſay nothing to them of their ſouls, or the life to come? If their houſes were on fire, thou wouldſt run and help them; and wilt thou not help them when their ſouls are almoſt at the fire of hell? If thou kneweſt but a remedy for their diſeaſes thou wouldſt tell it them, or elſe thou wouldſt judge thyſelf guilty of their death. *Cardon* ſpeaks of one that had a receipt that would diſſolve the ſtone in the bladder, and he makes no doubt but that man is in hell, becauſe he never revealed it to any before he died. What ſhall we ſay then of them that know the remedy for eaſing ſouls, and do not reveal it; nor perſuade men to make uſe of it? Is it not hypocriſy to pray, *That* God's *name may be hallowed*, and never endeavour to bring men to *hallow* it? And can you pray, *Let thy kingdom come;* and yet never labour for the coming or increaſe of that kingdom? Is it not grief to your hearts to ſee the kingdom of Satan flouriſh, and to ſee him lead captive ſuch a multitude of ſouls? You ſay you are ſoldiers of Chriſt, and will you do nothing againſt his prevailing enemies? You pray alſo daily, *That his will may be done;* and ſhould you not daily then perſuade them to do it? You pray, *That God would forgive them their ſins, and that he would not lead them into temptation, but deliver them from evil.* And yet will you not help them againſt temptaions, nor help to deliver them from the greateſt evil? — Nor help them to repent and believe, that they may be forgiven? Alas, that your prayers and your practice ſhould ſo much diſagree! Look about you therefore, chriſtians, with an eye of compaſſion on the ſinners about you; be not like the Prieſt or Levite that ſaw the man wounded,

and passed by: God did not so pass by you, when it was your own case. Are not the souls of your neighbours fallen into the hands of Satan? Doth not their misery cry out to you, Help! Help! As you have any compassion towards men in the greatest misery, Help! As you have the hearts of men, and not of tygers in you, Help!

But as this duty lieth upon all in general, so upon some more especially, according as God hath called or qualified them thereto. To them therefore more particularly I will address my exhortation: whether they be such as have more opportunity and advantages for this work, or such as have better abilities to perform it.

1. All you that God hath given more learning and knowledge to, or endued with better utterance than your neighbours; God expecteth this duty especially at your hand. The strong are made to help the weak, and those that see must direct the blind. God looketh for this faithful improvement of your parts and gifts, which if you neglect, it were better for you that you never had received them: for they will but further your condemnation, and be as useless to your own salvation, as they were to others.

2. All those especially that have familiarity with some ungodly men, and that have interest in them, God looks for this duty at their hands, Christ himself did eat and drink with the publicans and sinners, but it was only to be their physician, and not their companion. God might give you interest in them to this end, that you might be a means of their recovery. They that will not regard the words of another, will regard a brother, or sister, or husband, or wife, or near friend: besides that the bond of friendship doth engage you to more kindness and compassion.

3. Physicians, that are much about dying men should in a special manner make a conscience of this duty; they have a treble advantage. First, They are at hand. Secondly, They are with men in

in ſickneſs and dangers, when the ear is more open, and the heart leſs ſtubborn than in time of health. He that made a ſcorn of godlineſs before, will hear. Beſides, they look upon their phyſician as a man in whoſe hand is their life: or who at leaſt may do much to ſave them, and therefore they will the more regard his advice. Therefore you that are of this honourable profeſſion, do not think this a work beſide your calling, as if it belonged to none but miniſters: except you think it beſide your calling to be compaſſionate, or to be chriſtians. Help to fit your patients for heaven, and whether you ſee they are for life or death, teach them both how to live and to die, and give them ſome phyſic for their ſouls, as you do for their bodies. Bleſſed be God that very many of the chief phyſicians of this age have, by their eminent piety, vindicated their profeſſion from the common imputation of atheiſm and profaneneſs.

4. Another ſort that have excellent advantage for this duty, are men that have wealth and authority, and are of great place or command in the world, eſpecially that have many who live in dependence on them. O what a world of good might lords and gentlemen do, that have a great many tenants, and that are the leaders of the country, if they had but hearts to improve their intereſt and advantage! Little do you that are ſuch, think of the duty that lies upon you in this. Have you not all honour and riches from God? Is it not evident then, that you muſt employ them for the advantage of his ſervice? Do you not know who hath ſaid, *That to whom men commit much, from them they will expect the more?*

You have the greateſt opportunities to do good of moſt men in the world. Your tenants dare not contradict you, leſt you diſpoſſeſs them or their children of their habitations: they fear you more than the theatnings of the ſcripture: they will ſooner obey you than God. If you ſpeak to them for God and their ſouls, you may be

regarded, when ever a miniſter ſhall be deſpiſed. O therefore as you value the honour of God, your own comfort and the ſalvation of ſouls, improve your intereſt to the utmoſt for God. Go viſit your tenants and neighbours houſes, and ſee whether they worſhip God in their families, and take all opportunities to preſs them to their duties. Do not deſpiſe them, becauſe they are poor and ſimple. Remember, God is no reſpecter of perſons; your fleſh is of no better metal than theirs: nor will the worms ſpare your faces or hearts any more than theirs; nor will your bones or duſt bear the badge of your gentility; you muſt be all equals when you ſtand in judgment; and therefore help the ſoul of a poor man, as well as if he were a gentleman: and let men ſee that you excel others as much in piety and heavenlineſs, compaſſion, and diligence in God's work, as you do in riches and honour.

I confeſs you are like to be ſingular, if you take this courſe; but then remember you will be ſingular in glory, *few great, and mighty, and noble are called.*

5. Another ſort that have ſpecial opportunity to help others to heaven, are the miniſters of the goſpel: as they have or ſhould have more ability than others, ſo it is the very work of their calling; and every one expecteth it at their hands, and will better ſubmit to their teachers, than to others. I intend not theſe inſtructions ſo much to teachers as to others, and therefore I ſhall ſay but little to them; and if all, or moſt miniſters among us were as faithful and diligent as ſome, I would ſay nothing. But becauſe it is otherwiſe, let me give theſe two or three words of advice to my brethren, in this office.

1. Be ſure that the recovering and ſaving ſouls, be the main end of your ſtudies and preaching. O do not propound any low and baſe ends to yourſelves. This is the end of your calling, let it be alſo the end of your endeavours. God forbid that

that you ſhould ſpend a week's ſtudy to pleaſe the people, or to ſeek the advancing of your own reputations. Dare you appear in the pulpit on ſuch a buſineſs, and ſpeak for yourſelves, when you are ſent and pretend to ſpeak for Chriſt? Set out the work of God as ſkilfully as you can: but ſtill let the winning of ſouls be your end, and always judge that the beſt means, that moſt conduceth to the end. Do not think that God is beſt ſerved by a neat, ſtarched oration: but that he is the able ſkilful miniſter, that is beſt ſkilled in the art of inſtructing, convincing, perſuading, and that is the beſt ſermon that is beſt in theſe. Let the vigour alſo of your perſuaſions ſhew; that you are ſenſible on how weighty a buſineſs you are ſent. Preach with that ſerioufneſs and fervour as men that believe their own doctrine, and know their hearts muſt either be prevailed with, or damned. What you would do to ſave them from everlaſting burning, that do while you have the opportunity and price in your hand, that people may diſcern you mean as you ſpeak; and that you are not ſtage-players, but preachers, of the doctrine of ſalvation. Remember what *Cicero* ſaith, "That if the matter be never ſo combuſtible, yet if you put not fire to it it will not burn." And what *Eraſmus* ſaith, that "an hot iron will pierce, when a cold one will not." And if the wiſe men of the world account you mad, ſay as *Paul*, *if we are beſide ourſelves it is to God*: and remember that Chriſt was ſo buſy in doing good, that his friends themſelves began to lay hands on him, thinking he had been beſide himſelf, Mark iii.

2. The ſecond and chief word of advice that I would give you is this: do not think that all your work is in ſtudies, and in the pulpit. I confeſs that is great; but alas, it is but a ſmall part of your taſk. You are ſhepherds, and muſt know every ſheep, and what is their diſeaſe, and mark their ſtrayings, and help to cure them and fetch them home.

O learn of *Paul*, Act xx. 19. 20, 21, To preach publicly, and from houſe to houſe, night and day with tears. Let there not be a ſoul in your charge that ſhall not be particularly inſtructed and watched over. Go from houſe to houſe daily, and enquire how they grow in knowledge and holineſs, and on what grounds they build their hopes of ſalvation; and whether they walk uprightly, and perform the duties of their ſeveral relations, and uſe means to increaſe their abilities. See whether they daily worſhip God in their families, and ſet them in a way, and teach them how to do it; confer with them about the doctrines and practice of religion, and how they receive and profit by public teaching, and anſwer all their carnal objections; keep in familiarity with them, that you may maintain your intereſt in them, and improve all your intereſt for God. See that no ſeducers creep in amongſt them, or if they do, be diligent to countermine them, and preſerve your people from the infection of hereſies and ſchiſm; or if they be infected, be diligent to procure their recovery: not with paſſion and lordlineſs; but with patience and condeſcenſion; as *Muſculus* did by the *Anababtiſts*, viſiting them in priſon, where the magiſtrate had caſt them, and there inſtructing and relieving them; and though they reviled him when he came, and called him a falſe prophet, and antichriſtian ſeducer that thirſted for their blood, yet he would not leave them, till at laſt by his meekneſs and love he had overcome them, and recovered many to the truth, and to unity with the church.

If any be *weak in the faith, receive him, but not to doubtful diſputations.* If any be too careleſs of their duties, and too little ſavour the things of the Spirit, let them be pitied, and not neglected; if any walk ſcandalouſly and diſorderly, deal with them for their recovery, with all diligence and patience, and ſet before them the heinouſneſs and danger of their ſin; if they prove obſtinate after

after all, then avoid them, and caſt them off. If they be ignorant, it may be your fault as well as theirs; but however, they are fitter to be inſtructed than rejected, except they abſolutely refuſe to be taught. Chriſt will give you no thanks for keeping, or putting out ſuch from his ſchool that are unlearned, when their deſire or will is to be taught. I confeſs it is eaſier to ſhut out the ignorant, than to beſtow our pains night and day in teaching them; but woe to ſuch ſlothful, unfaithful ſervants? Who then is *a faithful and a wiſe ſervant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his houſehold, to give them their meat in due ſeaſon*, according to every one's age and capacity? *Bleſſed is that ſervant whom his Lord when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing.* O be not aſleep while the wolf is waking? Let your eye be quick in obſerving the dangers and ſtraying of your people. If jealouſies, heart-burnings, or contentions ariſe among them, quench them before they break out into raging, irreſiſtible flames. As ſoon as you diſcern any to turn worldly, or proud, or factious, or ſelf-conceited, or diſobedient, or cold, and ſlothful in his duty; delay not, but preſently make out for his recovery: remember how many are loſers in the loſs of a ſoul.

4. Do not daub, or deal ſlightly with any: ſome will not tell their people plainly of their ſins, becauſe they are great men, as if none but the poor ſhould be plainly dealt with: do not you ſo, but reprove them ſharply, (though differently, and with wiſdom) that they may be found in faith. God doth ſufficiently engage us to deal plainly: he hath bid us ſpeak and fear not; he hath promiſed to ſtand by us, and he will be our ſecurity; I had rather hear from the mouth of *Balak, God hath kept thee from honour;* or from *Ahab, Feed him with the bread and water of affliction;* than to hear conſcience ſay, *Thou haſt betrayed ſouls to damnation by thy cowardice and ſilence;* or to hear God ſay, *Their blood will I require at thy hands*; or to hear

from Chriſt the Judge, *Caſt the unprofitable ſervant into outer darkneſs, where ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth:* yea, or to hear theſe ſinners cry out againſt me in eternal fire, and with implacable rage to charge me with their undoing.

And as you muſt be plain and ſerious, ſo labour to be ſkilful and diſcreet, that the manner may ſomewhat anſwer the excellency of the matter: how often have I heard a ſtammering tongue, with ridiculous expreſſions, vain repetitions, tedious circumlocutions, and unſeemly pronunciations, ſpoil moſt precious doctrine, and make the hearers either loathe it, or laugh at it? How common are theſe extremes while one ſpoils the food of life by affectation, and new faſhioned mincing, and pedantic toys, either ſetting forth a little and mean matter with a great deal of froth, and gaudy dreſſing; or hiding excellent truths in a heap of vain rhetoric on the other ſide. How many by their ſlovenly dreſſing, make men loathe the food of life, and caſt up that which ſhould nouriſh them? Such novices are admitted into the ſacred function, to the hardening of the wicked, and the diſgrace of the work of the Lord; any of thoſe that are notable to ſpeak ſenſe or reaſon, are made the ambaſſadors of the moſt high God.

O therefore let me beſpeak you my brethren, in the name of the Lord, eſpecially thoſe that are more young and weak, that you tremble at the greatneſs of this holy employment, and run not up into a pulpit as boldly as into the market-place; ſtudy and pray, and pray and ſtudy, till you are become workmen that need not to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, that your people may not be aſhamed, or weary to hear you: but that beſides your clear unfolding the doctrine of the goſpel, you alſo may be maſters of your people's affections. It is a work that requireth your moſt ſerious ſearching thoughts: running, haſty, eaſy ſtudies, bring forth blind births. When you are the moſt renowned doctors in the church

of

of God, alas, how little is it that you know in compariſon of what you are ignorant of!

4. Be ſure that your converſation be teaching, as well as your doctrine. Do not confute your doctrine by your practice. Be as forward in a holy and heavenly life, as you are in preſſing it on others. Let your diſcourſe be as edifying and ſpiritual, as you teach them theirs muſt be: for evil language give them good; and bleſſings for curſing. Suffer any thing, rather than the goſpel and mens ſouls ſhould ſuffer: *Become all things* (lawful) *to all men, if by any means you may win ſome.* Let men ſee that you uſe not the miniſtry only for a trade to live by; but that your hearts are ſet upon the welfare of their ſouls. Whatſoever meekneſs, humility, condeſcenſion, or ſelf-denial you teach them from the goſpel, O teach it them alſo by your undiſſembled example. This is to be guides, and pilots, and governors of the church indeed.

What an odious ſight is it to ſee pride and ambition preach humility! And an earthly-minded man preach for a heavenly converſation!

Do I need to tell you that are teachers of others, that we have but a little while longer to preach? And but a few more breaths to breathe? And then we muſt come down, and be accountable for our work? Do I need to tell you, that we muſt die, and be judged as well as our people? Or that juſtice is more ſevere about the ſanctuary? And *judgment beginneth at the houſe of God?*

5. The laſt whom I would perſuade to this great work of helping others to the heavenly Reſt, are parents, and maſters of families: all you that God hath entruſted with children or ſervants, conſider what duty lieth on you, for furthering their ſalvation. That this exhortation may be the more effectual with you, I will lay down ſeveral conſiderations for you ſeriouſly to think on.

1. What plain and preſſing commands of God are there that require this great duty at your hand! Deut. vi. 6, 7, 8. *And theſe words which I command thee this day, ſhall be in thy heart, and thou ſhalt teach*

them diligently to thy children, ſpeaking of them when thou ſitteſt in thy houſe, and when thou walkeſt by the way, and when thou lieſt down, and when thou riſeſt up. And how well is God pleaſed with this in *Abraham?* Gen. xviii. 17, 19. *Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? For I know him, that he will command his children, and his houſehold after him, and that they ſhall keep the way of the Lord.* Prov. xxii. 6. *Train up a child in the way he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.* So that you ſee it is a work that the Lord of heaven and earth laid upon you, and how then dare you neglect it?

2. You will alſo be witneſſes againſt your own ſouls: your great care and pains, and coſt for their bodies, will condemn you for your neglect of their precious ſouls: you can ſpend yourſelves in toiling and caring for their bodies, and even neglect your own ſouls, and venture then ſometimes upon unwarrantable courſes, and all to provide for your poſterity; and have you not as much reaſon to provide for their ſouls? Do you not believe that your children muſt be everlaſtingly happy or miſerable? And ſhould not that be fore-thought in the firſt place?

3. Conſider, God hath made your children to be your charge: yea, and your ſervants too; every one will confeſs they are the miniſters charge, and what a dreadful thing it is for them to neglect them, when God hath told them, that if they tell not the wicked of their ſin and danger, their blood ſhall be required at that miniſter's hands: and is not your charge as great and as dreadful as their's? Have not you a greater charge of your own families than any miniſter hath? Yea doubtleſs, and your duty it is to teach, and admoniſh, and reprove them, and watch over them: at your hands elſe will God require the blood of their ſouls. The greateſt charge it is, that ever you was entruſted with, and woe to you if you prove unfaithful, and betray your truſt, and ſuffer them to be ignorant

for

for want of your teaching, or wicked for want of your admonition or correction.

4. Look into the diſpoſition and lives of your children, and ſee what a work there is for you to do. *Firſt*, It is not one ſin that you muſt help them againſt, but thouſands; their name is Legion, for they are many: it is not one weed that muſt be pulled up, but the field is overſpread with them. *Secondly*, And how hard is it to prevail againſt any one of them? They are hereditary diſeaſes, bred in their natures: they are as near them as the very heart, and how tenacious are all things of that ſort which is natural? How hard to teach a hare not to be afraid, or a lyon or tyger not to be fierce? Beſides the things you muſt teach them, are quite above them; yea, and clean contrary to the intereſt and deſires of the fleſh: how hard is it to teach a man to be willing to be poor and deſpiſed for Chriſt; to deny themſelves, and diſpleaſe the fleſh; to forgive an enemy; to love thoſe that hate us; to watch againſt temptations; to avoid occaſions and appearances of evil; to believe in a crucified Saviour; to rejoice in tribulation; to make God their delight and love; and to have their hearts in heaven, while they live on earth! I think none of this eaſy, they that think otherwiſe, let them try and judge; yet all this muſt be learned, or they are undone for ever. If you help them not to ſome trade, they cannot live in the world; but if they be deſtitute of theſe things, they ſhall not live in heaven. If the mariner be not ſkilful he muſt be drowned; and if the ſoldier be not ſkilful he may be ſlain; but they that cannot do the things above-mentioned, will periſh for ever: *for without holineſs no man ſhall ſee God.* O that the Lord would make all you that are parents ſenſible what a work and charge doth lie upon you! You that neglect this important work, and talk to your families of nothing but the world, I tell you, the blood of ſouls lies on you: make as light of it as you will, if you repent not and amend, the Lord will ſhortly call you to an account

count for the guilt of your children's everlaſting undoing.

5. Think with yourſelves, what a world of comfort you may have, if you be faithful in this duty: if you ſhould not ſucceed, yet you have freed your own ſouls; and though it be ſad, yet you may have peace in your own conſciences: but if you do ſucceed, the comfort is inexpreſſible. For, 1. Good children will be truly loving to their parents when a little matter will make ungodly children caſt off their very natural affection. 2. Good children will be moſt obedient to you; they dare not diſobey you, becauſe of the command of God, except you ſhould command them that which is unlawful, then they muſt obey God rather than men. 3. And if you ſhould fall into want, they would be moſt faithful in relieving you, as knowing they are tied by a double bond of nature and of grace. 4. And they will alſo be helpers to your ſouls, they will be delighting you with holy conference and actions; when wicked children will be grieving you with curſing and ſwearing, or drunkenneſs, or diſobedience. 5. But the greateſt joy will be when you will ſay, *Here am I, and the children thou haſt given me.* And are not all theſe comforts enough to perſuade you to this duty?

6. Conſider further, That the very welfare of church and ſtate lieth mainly on this duty of well educating children; and without this, all other means are like to be far leſs ſucceſsful. I ſeriouſly profeſs to you, that I verily think all the ſins and miſeries of the land may acknowledge this ſin for their nurſe. It is not good laws and orders that will reform us, if the men be not good, and reformation begin not at home when children go wicked from the hands of their parents, in every profeſſion they bring this fruit of their education with them. I tell you ſeriouſly, this is the cauſe of all our miſeries in church and ſtate, even the want of a holy education in children! Many lay the blame on this neglect, and that; but there is none that hath ſo great a hand in it as this.

7. I

7. I entreat you that are parents, to conſider, what excellent advantages you have above all others for the ſaving of your children.

1. They are under your hands while they are young and tender, and flexible; but they come to miniſters when they are grown older, and ſtiffer, and ſettled in their ways, and think themſelves too good to be catechiſed. You have a twig to bend, and we an oak: you have the young plants of ſin to pluck up, and we the deep rooted vices. The conſciences of children are not to be ſeared with a cuſtom of ſinning, and long reſiſting grace, as others. You have the ſoft and tender earth to plough in, and we have the hard and ſtony ways that have been trodden on by many years practice of evil. We have a double taſk, firſt to unteach them, and then to teach them better, but you have but one. We muſt unteach them all that the world, and the fleſh, and wicked company, and the devil have been diligently teaching them in many years. You have them before they are poſſeſſed with prejudice againſt the truth; but we have them to teach, when they have many years lived among thoſe that have taught them to think God's ways to be fooliſh. Doth not the experience of all the world ſhew you the power of education? What elſe makes all the children of the Jews to be *Jews?* and all the children of the *Turks* to be *Mahometans?* And of each ſect or party in religion to follow their parents? Now what an advantage have you to uſe all this for the furtherance of their happineſs?

2. Conſider alſo, that you have the affections of your children more than any others: none in the world hath that intereſt in their hearts as you. You will receive that counſel from an undoubted friend, that you would not do from an enemy, or a ſtranger. Now your children know you are their friends, and adviſe them in love; and they cannot but love you again. Nature hath almoſt neceſſitated

neceſſitated them to love you. O therefore improve this your intereſt in them for their good.

3. You have alſo the greateſt authority over them. You may command them, and they dare not diſobey you, or elſe it is your own fault, for the moſt part; for you can make them obey you in your buſineſs; yea, you may correct them to enforce obedience. Your authority is alſo the moſt unqueſtioned authority in the world. The authority of kings and parliaments have been diſputed, but yours is paſt diſpute. And therefore if you uſe it not to bring them to God, you are without excuſe.

4. Beſides, their dependance is on you for their maintenance. They know you can either give them, or deny them what you have, and ſo puniſh and reward them at your pleaſure. But on miniſters or neighbours they have no dependance.

5. Moreover, you that are parents know the temper and inclination of your children, what vices they are moſt inclined to, and what inſtruction and reproof they moſt need: but miniſters cannot ſo well tell this.

6. Above all, you are ever with them, and ſo have opportunity, as you know their faults, ſo to apply the remedy. You may be ſtill talking to them of the word of God, and minding them of their ſtate and duty, and may follow and ſet home every word of advice, as they are in the houſe with you, or in the ſhop, or in the field: O what an excellent advantage is this, if you have hearts to uſe it. Eſpecially you mothers, remember this; you are more with your children while they are little ones than their fathers, be you therefore ſtill teaching them as ſoon as ever they are capable of learning. You cannot do God ſuch eminent ſervices yourſelves as men; but you may train up children that may do it, and then you will have part of the comfort and honour. What a deal of pains are you at with the bodies of your children more than the fathers? And what do you ſuffer to bring them into the world; and will not you be at as much

pains

pains for the ſaving their ſouls? You are naturally of more tender affections than men; and will it not move you to think that your children ſhould periſh for ever? Therefore I beſeech you, for the ſake of the children of your bowels, teach them, admoniſh them, watch over them, and give them no reſt till you have brought them to Chriſt.

And thus I have ſhewn you reaſon enough to make you diligent in teaching your children.

Let us next hear what is uſually objected againſt this by negligent men.

Objection 1. We do not ſee but thoſe children prove as bad as others, that are taught the ſcriptures, and brought up ſo holily; and theſe prove as honeſt men that have none of this ado with them.

Anſwer. Who art thou, O man, that diſputeſt againſt God? Hath God charged "you to teach your children diligently his word, ſpeaking of it as you ſit at home, and walk abroad, as you lie down and as you riſe up;" and dare you reply, that it is as good let alone? Why, this is to ſet God at defiance; and as it were to ſpit in his face, and give him the lie. Will you take it well at your ſervants, if when you command them to do a thing, they ſhould return you an anſwer that they do not ſee but it were as good let it alone? Wretched worm, dareſt thou thus lift up thy head againſt the Lord that made thee, and muſt judge thee? Is it not he that commandeth thee? If thou believe that this is the word of God, how dareſt thou ſay, It is good to diſobey it? This is deviliſh pride indeed, when ſuch ſottiſh, ſinful duſt ſhall think themſelves wiſer than the living God.

2. But what if ſome prove bad that are well brought up. It is not the generality of them. Will you ſay that *Noah*'s family was no better than the drowned world, becauſe there was one *Ham* in it? Nor *David*'s becauſe there was one *Abſalom*? Nor *Chriſt*'s, becauſe there was one *Judas*?

3. But what if it were ſo? Have men need of the leſs teaching, or the more? You have more wit

wit in the matters of this world. You will not ſay, I ſee many labour hard, and yet are poor, and therefore it is as good never to labour at all: you will not ſay, that many that go to ſchool learn nothing, and therefore they may learn as much though they never go; or many that are great tradeſmen break, and therefore it is good never to trade at all; or many plow and ſow, and have nothing comes up, and therefore it is as good never to plow more? What a fool were he that ſhould reaſon thus? And is not he a thouſand times worſe, that ſhould reaſon thus for mens ſouls. Peter reaſons the clear contrary way, *If the righteous be ſcarcely ſaved, where ſhall the ungodly and ſinner appear?* 1 Pet. iv. 18. And ſo doth *Chriſt.* Luke xiii. 24. *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate; for many ſhall ſeek to enter, and not be able.* Other mens miſcarriages ſhould quicken our diligence, and not make us caſt away all. What would you think of that man that ſhould look over into his neighbour's garden, and becauſe he ſees here and there a nettle or weed among much better ſtuff, ſhould ſay, Why, you may ſee theſe men that beſtow ſo much pains in digging and weeding, have weeds in their garden as well as I that do nothing, and therefore who would be at ſo much pains? Juſt thus doth the mad world talk. You may now ſee that thoſe that pray and read, and follow ſermons, have their faults as well as we, and have wicked perſons among them, as well as we; yea, but that is not the whole garden as yours is; it is but here and there a weed, and as ſoon as they ſpy it, they pluck it up, and caſt it away.

Object. 2. Some further object. It is the work of miniſters to teach both us and our children, and therefore we may be excuſed.

Anſwer 1. It is firſt your duty, and then the miniſter's. It will be no excuſe for you, becauſe it is their work, except you could prove it were only theirs. Magiſtrates muſt govern both you and your children: doth it therefore follow that you muſt not

not govern them? It belongs to the Schoolmaſter to correct them, and doth it not belong alſo to you? There muſt go many hands to this great work; as in the building of a houſe there muſt be many workmen, one to one part and another to another, and one muſt not leave his part, and ſay it belongs to the other: ſo it is here in the inſtruction of your children; firſt you muſt do your work, and then the miniſter muſt do his: you muſt be doing it privately night and day; the miniſter muſt do it publicly and privately, as oft as he can.

2. But as the caſe now ſtands with miniſters, they are diſabled from doing that which belongs to their office, and therefore you cannot now caſt your work on them. I will inſtance but in two things:

Firſt. It belongs to their office to govern the church, and to teach with authority; and great and ſmall are commanded to obey them, Heb. xiii. 7. 17. But this is unknown, and hearers look on themſelves as free-men, that may obey or not, at their own pleaſure. People think we have authority to ſpeak to them when they pleaſe to hear, and no more. Nay, few of the godly themſelves underſtand the authority that their teachers have over them from Chriſt: they know how to value a miniſter's gifts, but not how they are bound to obey him becauſe of his office; not that they ſhould obey him in evil, nor that he ſhould be a final decider of all controverſies, nor ſhould exerciſe his authority in things of no moment; but as a ſchoolmaſter may command his ſcholars when to come to ſchool, and what book to read, and what form to be of, and as they ought to obey him, and learn of him, and not to ſet their wits againſt his, but to take his word, and believe him as their teacher, till they underſtand, as well as he, and are ready to leave his ſchool; juſt ſo are people bound to obey and learn of their teachers. Now this miniſterial authority is unknown, and ſo miniſters are the

the leſs capable of doing their work; which comes to paſs, 1. From the pride of man's nature, eſpecially novices, which makes men impatient of the reins of guidance and command: 2. From the *Popiſh* error of implicit faith; to avoid which we are driven as far into the contrary extreme: and 3. From the modeſty of miniſters, that are loath to ſhew their commiſſion, and make known their authority, leſt they ſhould be thought proud: as if a pilot ſhould let the ſeamen run the ſhip whither they will, for fear of being thought proud in exerciſing his authority:

Secondly, A far greater clog than this doth lie upon miniſters, which few take notice of; and that is, the fewneſs of miniſters, and the greatneſs of congregations. In the apoſtle's time every church had a multitude of miniſters, and ſo it muſt be again, or we ſhall never come near that primitive pattern; and they could preach publicly, and from houſe to houſe: but now, when there is but one or two miniſters to many thouſand ſouls, we cannot teach them one by one: ſo that you ſee you have little reaſon to caſt your work on the miniſters, but ſhould the more help them by your diligence in your ſeveral families, becauſe they are already ſo over-burthened.

Object. 3. But ſome will ſay, we are poor men, and muſt labour for our living, and ſo muſt our children! we cannot have time to teach them the ſcriptures, we have ſomewhat elſe for them to do.

Anſwer. And are not poor men ſubject to God, as well as rich? And are they not chriſtians? And muſt they not give an account of their ways? And have not your children ſouls to ſave or loſe, as well as the rich? Cannot you find time to ſpeak to them as they are at their work? Have you not time to inſtruct them on the Lord's-day? You can find time to talk idly, as poor as you are; and can you find no time to talk of the way to life? You can find time on the Lord's-day for poor children to play, or walk or talk in the ſtreets, but no time to mind the life to come. Methinks you ſhould rather

rather ſay to your children, I have no lands to leave you; you have no hope of great matters here: be ſure therefore to make the Lord your portion, that you may be happy hereafter; if you could get riches, they would ſhortly leave you, but the riches of grace and glory will be everlaſting. Methinks you ſhould ſay, as Peter, *Silver and gold I have none; but ſuch as I have I give you.* The kingdoms of the world cannot be had by beggars, but the kingdom of heaven may.

O what a terrible reckoning will many poor men have, when Chriſt ſhall plead his cauſe, and judge them! May not he ſay, I made the way to worldly honours inacceſſible to you, that you might not look after it for yourſelves, or your children; but heaven I ſet open, that you might have nothing to diſcourage you: I confined riches and honours to a few: but my blood and ſalvation I offered to all, that none might ſay, I was not invited: I tendered heaven to the poor as well as the rich: I made no exception againſt the meaneſt beggar; why then did you not come yourſelves, and bring your children, and teach them the way to the eternal inheritance? Do you ſay you were poor? Why I did not ſet heaven to ſale for money; I called thoſe that had nothing, to take it freely; only on condition they would take me for their Saviour and Lord, and give up themſelves to me in obedience and love.

What can you anſwer Chriſt, when he ſhall thus convince you? Is it not enough that your children are poor and miſerable here, but you would have them be worſe for ever? If your children were beggars, yet if they were ſuch beggars as *Lazarus*, they may be conveyed by angels into the preſence of God. But believe it, as God will ſave no man becauſe he is a gentleman, ſo will he ſave no man becauſe he is a beggar. God hath ſo ordered it in his providence, that riches are common occaſions of mens damnation, and will you think poverty a ſufficient excuſe? The hardeſt point in all our work is to be weaned from the world, and in love with heaven; and if you will not be

weaned

weaned from it that have nothing in it but labour and ſorrow, you have no excuſe. The poor pretend they cannot have time, and the rich will not have time, or they are aſhamed to be ſo forward: the young think it too ſoon, and the old too late; and thus moſt men inſtead of being ſaved, have ſomewhat to ſay againſt their ſalvation; and when Chriſt ſendeth to invite them, they ſay, *I pray thee have me excuſed.* O unworthy gueſt of ſuch a bleſſed feaſt, and worthy to be turned into everlaſting burnings!

Object. 4. But ſome will object, We have been brought up in ignorance ourſelves, and therefore we are unable to teach our children.

Anſwer. Indeed this is the very ſore of the land; but is it not a pity that men ſhould ſo receive their deſtruction by tradition? Would you have this courſe to go on thus ſtill? Your parents did not teach you, and therefore you cannot teach your children, and therefore they cannot teach theirs: by this courſe the knowledge of God would be baniſhed out of the world, and never be recovered. But if your parents did not teach you, why did not you learn when you came to age? The truth is, you had no hearts for it; for he that hath not knowledge, cannot value it, or love it. But yet, though you have greatly ſinned, it is not too late; if you will follow my faithful advice in theſe four points.

1. Get your hearts deeply ſenſible of your own ſin and miſery, becauſe of this long time which you have ſpent in ignorance and neglect. Bethink yourſelves when you are alone: did not God make you, and ſuſtain you for his ſervice? Should not he have had the youth and ſtrength of your ſpirits? Did you live all this time at the door of eternity? What if you had died in ignorance, where had you been? What a deal of time have you ſpent to little purpoſe? Your life is near done, and your work all undone. You are ready to die before you have learned to live. Should not God have had a better ſhare of your lives, and your ſouls been

been more regarded and provided for? In the midſt of theſe thoughts, caſt down yourſelves in ſorrow, as at the feet of Chriſt; bewail your folly, and beg pardon and recovering grace.

2. Then think as ſadly how you have wronged your children. If a ſpendthrift that hath ſold all his lands, will lament it for his children's ſake, as well as his own, much more ſhould you.

3. Next ſet preſently to work, and learn yourſelves. If you can read, do; if you cannot, get ſome that can, and be much among theſe that will inſtruct you: be not aſhamed to be ſeen among learners, but be aſhamed that you had not learned ſooner. God forbid you ſhould be ſo mad as to ſay, I am now too old to learn; except you be too old to ſerve God, and be ſaved? How can you be too old to learn to be ſaved? Why not rather, I am too old to ſerve the devil, and the world, I have tried them too long to truſt them any more. What if your parents had not taught you any trade to live by? Would you not have ſet yourſelves to learn, when you come of age? Remember that you have ſouls to care for, as well as your children, and therefore firſt begin with yourſelves.

4. While you are learning yourſelves, teach your children what you do know; and what you cannot teach them yourſelves, put them to learn of others that can: perſuade them into the company of thoſe who will be glad to inſtruct them. Have you no neighbours that will be helpful to you herein? O do not keep yourſelves ſtrange to them, but go among them, and deſire their help, and be thankful to them, that they will entertain you in their company. God forbid that you ſhould be like thoſe that Chriſt ſpeaks of, Luke xi. 52, *That would neither enter into the kingdom of God themſelves, nor ſuffer thoſe that would to enter.* God forbid you ſhould be ſuch barbarous wretches, as to hinder your children from being godly, and to teach them to be wicked? If any thing that walks in fleſh may be called a devil, I think it is a parent that hindereth his children from ſalvation: nay, I will

will ſay more, I verily think that in this they are far worſe than the devil. God is a righteous judge, and will not make the devil himſelf worſe than he is: I pray you be patient while you conſider it, and then judge yourſelves. They are the parents of their children, and ſo is not the devil: do you think then that it is as great a fault in him to ſeek their deſtruction, as in them? Is it as great a fault for the wolf to kill the lambs, as for their own dams to do it? Is it ſo horrid a fault for an enemy in war to kill a child, or for a bear or a mad dog to kill it, as for the mother to daſh its brains againſt a wall? You know it is not: do you not think then that it is ſo hateful a thing in Satan to entice your children to ſin and hell, and to diſcourage and diſſuade them from holineſs, as it is in you. You are bound to love them by nature, more than Satan is. O then, what people are thoſe that will teach their children, inſtead of holineſs, to curſe and ſwear, and rail, and backbite, to be proud and revengeful, and break the Lord's-day, and to deſpiſe his ways, to ſpeak wantonly and filthily, to ſcorn at holineſs, and glory in ſin! O when God ſhall aſk theſe children, Where learned you this language and practice? and they ſhall ſay, I learned it of my father or mother; I would not be in the caſe of thoſe parents for all the world! Alas, is it a work, that is worth the teaching, to undo themſelves for ever? Or can they not without teaching learn it too eaſily of themſelves? Do you need to teach a ſerpent to ſting, or a lion to be fierce? Do you need to ſow weeds in your garden? Will they not grow of themſelves? To build a houſe requires ſkill and teaching, but a little may ſerve to ſet a town on fire: to heal the wounded or the ſick, requireth ſkill; but to make a man ſick, or to kill him, requires but little. You may ſooner teach your children to ſwear, than to pray; and ſo mock at godlineſs, than to be truly godly. If theſe parents were ſworn enemies to their children, and ſhould ſtudy ſeven years how to do them the greateſt miſchief, they could

could not poſſibly find out a ſurer way, than by drawing them to ſin, and withdrawing them from God.

I ſhall therefore conclude with this earneſt requeſt to all chriſtian parents that read theſe lines, that they would have compaſſion on the ſouls of their poor children, and be faithful to the great truſt God hath put on them. O ſirs, if you cannot do what you would for them, yet do what you can. Both church and ſtate, city and country, groan under the neglect of this weighty duty; your children know not God nor his laws; but take his name in vain, and ſlight his worſhip; and you do neither inſtruct them, nor correct them, and therefore God doth correct both them and you. You are ſo tender of them, that God is the leſs tender both of them and you. Wonder not if God make you ſmart for your children's ſins; for you are guilty of all they commit, by your neglect of doing your duty to reform them; even as he that maketh a man drunk, is guilty of all the ſin that he committeth in his drunkenneſs. Will you reſolve therefore to ſet upon this duty, and neglect it no longer? Remember *Eli:* your children are like *Moſes* in the baſket, in the water, ready to periſh if they have not help. As ever you would not be charged before God for murderers of their ſouls, and as ever you would not have them cry out againſt you in everlaſting fire, ſee that you teach them how to eſcape it, and bring them up in holineſs, and the fear of God.

You have heard that the God of heaven doth flatly command it; I charge every one of you therefore, upon your allegiance to him, as you will very ſhortly anſwer the contrary at your peril, that you will neither refuſe nor neglect this moſt neceſſary work. If you are not willing to do it, now you know it to be ſo plain and ſo great a duty, you are flat rebels, and no true ſubjects of Chriſt. If you are willing to do it, but know not how, I will add a few words of direction to help you.

1. Teach them by your example, as well as by your words. Be yourſelves ſuch as you would have them to be: practice is the moſt effectual teaching of children, who are addicted to imitation, eſpecially of their parents. Lead them the way to prayer, and reading, and other duties. Be not like baſe commanders, that will put on their ſoldiers, but not go on themſelves. Can you expect your children ſhould be wiſer and better than you? Let them not hear thoſe words out of your mouths, nor ſee thoſe practices in your lives, which you reprove in them. Who ſhould lead the way of holineſs but the father and maſter of a family? It is a ſad time when a maſter or a father, will not hinder his family from ſerving God, but will give them leave to go to heaven without him.

I will but name the reſt of your direct duty for your family. 1. You muſt help to inform their underſtandings. 2. To ſtore their memories. 3. To rectify their wills. 4. To quicken their affections. 5. To keep tender their conſciences. 6. To reſtrain their tongues, and help them to ſkill in gracious ſpeech; and to reform and watch over their outward converſations.

To theſe ends, 1. Be ſure to keep them, at leaſt, ſo long at ſchool till they can read Engliſh. It is a thouſand pities a reaſonable creature ſhould look upon a Bible, as upon a ſtone or a piece of wood. 2. Get them Bibles and good books, and ſee that they read them. 3. Examine them often what they learn. 4. Eſpecially ſpend the Lord's-day in this work, and ſee that they ſpend it not in ſports and idleneſs. 5. Shew them the meaning of what they read and learn. 6. Acquaint them with, and keep them in company, where they may learn good, and keep them out of that company that would teach them evil. 7. Be ſure to cauſe them to learn ſome catechiſm, containing the chief heads of divinity.

The heads of divinity which you muſt teach them firſt, are theſe:

1. That

1. That there is only one God, who is a Spirit, inviſible, infinite, eternal, almighty, good, merciful, true, juſt, holy. 2. That this God is One in Three, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. 3. That he is the maker, maintainer, and Lord of all. 4. That man's happineſs conſiſteth in the enjoying of this God, and not in fleſhly pleaſures, profits, or honours. 5. That God made the firſt man upright and happy, and gave him a law to keep, with condition, that if he kept it perfectly, he ſhould live happy for ever; but if he broke it he ſhould die. 6. That man broke this law, and ſo forfeited his welfare, and became guilty of death, as to himſelf, and all his poſterity. 7. That Chriſt the Son of God did here interpoſe and prevent the full execution, undertaking to die inſtead of man, and to redeem him. 8. That Chriſt hereupon did make with man a better covenant, which proclaimed pardon of ſin to all that did but repent and believe, and obey ſincerely. 9. That he revealed this covenant and mercy to the world by degrees: firſt, in darker promiſes, prophecies, and ſacrifices; then in many ceremonious types; and then by more plain foretelling by the prophets. 10. That in the fulneſs of time Chriſt came and took our nature into union with his godhead, being conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, and born of the virgin *Mary*. 11. That while he was on earth, he lived a life of ſorrows, was crowned with thorns, and bore the pains that our ſins deſerved; at laſt being crucified to death, and buried, ſo ſatisfied the juſtice of God. 12. That he alſo preached to the *Jews*, and by conſtant miracles proved the truth of his doctrines before thouſands of witneſſes: that he revealed more fully his new covenant, that whoſoever will believe in him, and accept him for their Saviour and Lord, ſhall be pardoned and ſaved, and have a far greater glory than they loſt: and they that will not, ſhall lie under the curſe and guilt, and be condemned to the everlaſting fire of hell. 13. That he roſe again from the dead, having conquered death, and took poſ-

ſeſſion of his dominion over all, and ſo aſcended up into heaven, and there reigneth in glory. 14. That before his aſcenſion he gave charge to his apoſtles to preach the goſpel to all nations and perſons, and to offer Chriſt, and mercy, and life, to every one without exception, and to entreat and perſuade them to receive him, and that he gave them authority to ſend forth others on the ſame meſſage, and to baptize and to gather churches, and confirm and order them, and ſettle a courſe for the ſucceſſion of miniſters and ordinances to the end of the world. 15. That he alſo gave them power to work frequent and evident miracles for the confirmation of their doctrine; and to annex their writings to the reſt of the ſcriptures, and ſo to finiſh and ſeal them up, and deliver them to the world as his infallible word, which none muſt dare to alter, and which all muſt obſerve. 16. That for all his free grace is offered to the world, yet the heart is by nature ſo deſperately wicked, that no man will believe and entertain Chriſt ſincerely, except by an almighty power he be changed and born again; and therefore doth Chriſt ſend forth his Spirit with his word, which worketh holineſs in our hearts, drawing us to God and the Redeemer. 17. That the means by which Chriſt worketh and preſerveth this grace, is the word read and preached, together with frequent, fervent prayer, meditation, ſacraments, and gracious conference; and it is much furthered alſo by ſpecial Providence keeping us from temptation; fitting occurrences to our advantage, drawing us by mercies, and driving us by afflictions; and therefore it muſt be the great and daily care of every chriſtian to uſe faithfully all the ordinances, and improve all providences. 18. That though the new law or covenant be an eaſy yoke, and there is nothing grievous in Chriſt's commands; yet ſo bad are our hearts, and ſo ſtrong our temptations, and ſo diligent our enemies, that whoſoever will be ſaved, muſt ſtrive, and watch, and beſtow his utmoſt care and pains, and deny his fleſh, and forſake all that would

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draw him from Chriſt, and herein continue to the end, and overcome; and becauſe this cannot be done without continual ſupplies of grace, whereof Chriſt is the only fountain, therefore we muſt live in continual dependance on him by faith, and know, *that our life is hid with God in him.* 19. That Chriſt will thus by his word and Spirit gather him a church out of all the world, which is his body and ſpouſe, and he their head and huſband, and will be tender of them as the apple of his eye, and preſerve them from danger, and continue among them his preſence and ordinances; and that the members of this church muſt live together in entire love and peace, delighting themſelves in God, and his worſhip, and the fore-thoughts of their everlaſting happineſs; forbearing and forgiving one another, and relieving each other in need: and all men ought to ſtrive to be of this Society: yet will the viſible churches be ſtill mixed of good and bad. 20. That when the full number of theſe are called home, Chriſt will come down from heaven again, and raiſe all the dead, and ſet them before him to be judged; and all that have loved God, and believed in Chriſt, and been willing that he ſhould reign over them, and have improved their mercies in the day of grace, them he will juſtify, and ſentence them to inherit everlaſting glory: and thoſe that were not ſuch, he will condemn to everlaſting fire: both which ſentences ſhall be then executed accordingly.

This is the brief ſum of the doctrine which you muſt teach your children. Though our ordinary creed, called the Apoſtles creed, contain all the abſolute fundamentals: and yet in ſome it is ſo generally and darkly expreſſed, that an explication is neceſſary.

Then for matter of practice, teach them the meaning of the commandments, eſpecially of the great commands of the goſpel; ſhew them what is commanded and forbidden, in the firſt table and in the ſecond, towards God and men, in regard of the inward and outward man. And here ſhew them,

1. The authority commanding, that is, the Almighty God, by Chriſt the Redeemer. They are not now to look at the command as coming from God immediately, merely as God, or the Creator; but as coming from God, by Chriſt the Mediator, *who is now the Lord of all;* ſeeing *the Father now judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son.* 2. Shew them the terms on which duty is required, and the ends of it. 3. And the nature of duties, and the way to perform them aright. 4. And the right order, that they firſt love God, and then their neighbour; *firſt ſeek the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs.* 5. Shew them the excellencies and delight of God's ſervice. 6. And the flat neceſſity. 7. Eſpecially labour to get all to their hearts, and teach them not only to ſpeak the words.

And for ſin, ſhew them its evil and danger, and watch over them againſt it. Eſpecially, 1. The ſins that youth is commonly addicted to. 2. And which their nature and conſtitution muſt lead them to. 3. And which the time and place moſt ſtrongly tempt to. 4. But eſpecially be ſure to kill their killing ſins, thoſe that all are prone to, and are of all moſt deadly; as pride, worldlineſs, ignorance, profaneneſs, and fleſh-pleaſing.

And for the manner, you muſt do all this, 1. Betimes, before ſin get rooting. 2. Frequently. 3. Seaſonably. 4. Seriouſly and diligently. 5. Affectionately and tenderly. 6. And with authority: compelling, where commanding will not ſerve, and adding correction, where inſtruction is fruſtrated.

And thus I have done with the uſe of exhortation, to do our utmoſt for the ſalvation of others. The Lord give them compaſſionate hearts, that it may be practiſed, and then I doubt not but he will ſucceed it to the increaſe of his church.

End of the Second Part.

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THE

Saints Everlasting Rest.

PART III.

Containing a DIRECTORY for the getting and keeping the heart in heaven, by the diligent practice of that excellent duty of MEDITATION.

CHAP. I.

Reproving our expectations of Rest on Earth.

DOTH this Rest remain? How great then is our sin and folly to seek and expect it here? Where shall we find the Christian that deserves not this reproof? Surely we may all cry guilty to this. We know not how to enjoy convenient houses, goods, lands, and revenues, but we seek Rest in these enjoyments. We seldom, I fear, have such sweet and contenting thoughts of God and glory, as we have of our earthly delights. How much Rest do we seek in buildings, walks, apparel, ease, recreation, sleep, pleasing meats and drinks, company, health and strength, and long life? Nay, we can scarce enjoy the necessary means that God hath appointed for our spiritual good, but we are seeking Rest in them. Our books, our preachers, sermons, friends, abilities for duty,—do not our hearts quiet themselves in them, even more than in

God? Indeed in words we disclaim, and God hath usually the pre-eminence in our tongues and profession: but do we not desire these more violently when we want them, than we do the Lord himself? Do we not cry out more sensibly, O my friend, my goods, my health! than O my God! Do we not miss ministry and means more passionately, than we miss our God? Do we not bestir ourselves more to obtain and enjoy these, than we do to recover our communion with God? Do we not delight more in the possession of these than we do in the fruition of God himself? Nay, are not those mercies and duties more pleasant to us, wherein we stand at the greatest distance from God? We can read, and study, and confess, preach and hear, day after day, without much weariness; because in these we have to do with instruments and creatures: but in secret prayer and conversing with God immediately, where no creature interposeth, how dull, how heartless and weary are we? And if we lose creatures or means, doth it not trouble us more than our loss of God? If we lose but a friend, or health, all the town will hear of it: but we can miss our God and scarce bemoan our misery. Thus it is apparent, we make the creature our Rest. It is not enough that they are refreshing helps in our way to heaven; but they must also be made our heaven itself? Reader, I would as willingly make thee sensible of this sin, as of any sin in the world; for the Lord's greatest quarrel with us is in this point. Therefore I must earnestly beseech thee to press upon thine own conscience these following considerations:

1. It is gross idolatry to make any creature or means our Rest: to settle the soul upon it, and say, Now I am well, upon the bare enjoyment of the creature: what is this but to make it our god? Certainly to be the soul's Rest is God's own prerogative. And as it is palpable idolatry to place our Rest in riches and honours; so it is but a more refined idolatry to take up our rest in excellent means, in the church's prosperity, and in its reformation.

formation. When we would have all that out of God, which is to be had only in God; what is this but to run away from Him to the creature, and in our hearts to deny him? When we fetch more of our comfort from the thoughts of proſperity, and thoſe mercies which we have at a diſtance from God, than from the fore-thoughts of our everlaſting bleſſedneſs in him? are we chriſtians in judgment and pagans in affection? Do we give our ſenſes leave to be chuſers of our happineſs, while reaſon and faith ſtand by? O how ill muſt our dear Lord needs take it, when we give him cauſe to complain, as ſometime he did of our fellow-idolaters, Jer. 1. 6. that we have been loſt ſheep, and have forgotten our reſting place! When we give him cauſe to ſay, My people can find reſt in any thing rather than in me! They can find delight in one another but none in me; they can rejoice in my creatures and ordinances, but not in me; yea, in their very labours and duty they ſeek for reſt, but not in me; they had rather be any where than be with me. Are theſe their gods? Have theſe delivered and redeemed them? Will theſe be better to them than I have been, or than I would be? If yourſelves have but a wife, a huſband, a ſon, that had rather be any where than in your company, and is never ſo merry as when fartheſt from you, would you not take it ill yourſelves? Why ſo muſt our God needs do. For what do we but lay theſe things in one end of the balance and God in the other, and fooliſhly prefer them before him. As *Elkanah* ſaid to *Hannah, am not I better to thee than ten ſons!* So when we are longing after creatures, we may hear God ſay, Am not I better than all the creatures to thee?

2. Conſider how thou contradicteſt the end of God in giving theſe things. He gave them to help thee to him, and doſt thou take up with them in his ſtead? He gave them that they might be refreſhments in thy journey; and would thou now dwell in thy inn, and go no farther? Thou doſt not only contradict God herein, but loſeſt that

benefit which thou mighteſt receive by them, yea, and makeſt them thy great hurt and hindrance. Surely, it may be ſaid of all our comforts and all ordinances, and the bleſſedeſt enjoyments in the church on earth, as God ſaid to the Iſraelites, of his ark, Numb. x. 33, *The ark of the covenant went before them, to ſearch out for them a reſting-place.* So do all God's mercies here. They are not that reſt (as *John* profeſſeth he was not the Chriſt) but they are voices crying in the wilderneſs, to bid us prepare; for the kingdom of God, our true reſt, is at hand. Therefore to reſt here, were to turn all mercies clean contrary to their own ends, and our own advantages, and to deſtroy ourſelves with that which ſhould help us.

3. Conſider, whether it be not the moſt probable way, to cauſe God, either, firſt, to deny thoſe mercies which we deſire; or ſecondly, to take from us theſe which we enjoy; or thirdly, to imbitter them, or curſe them to us? Certainly, God is no where ſo jealous as here: if you had a ſervant whom your wife loved better than ſhe did yourſelf, would you not take it ill of ſuch a wife, and rid your houſe of ſuch a ſervant? Why ſo, if the Lord ſee you begin to ſettle in the world, and ſay, Here I will reſt, no wonder if he ſoon in his jealouſy unſettle you. If he love you, no wonder if he take that from you wherewith he ſees you about to deſtroy yourſelves.

It has been my long obſervation of many, that when they have attempted any great works and had juſt finiſhed them; or have aimed at great things in the world, and have juſt obtained them; or have lived in much trouble, and juſt come to begin with ſome content to look upon their condition, and reſt in it, they are near to death and ruin. When a man is once at this language, *Soul take thy eaſe:* the next news uſually is, *Thou fool, this night*, or this month, or this year, *ſhall thy ſoul be required of thee, and then whoſe ſhall theſe things be?* O what houſe is there where this fool dwelleth not? Let you and I conſider, whether this be not

not our own caſe. Have not I, after ſuch an unſettled life, and after ſo many longing and prayers for theſe days! Have not I thought of them with too much content, and been ready to ſay, *Soul take thy reſt?* Have not I comforted myſelf more in the fore-thought of enjoying theſe, than of coming to heaven, and enjoying God? What wonder then if God cut me off, when I am juſt ſitting down in this ſuppoſed Reſt? And hath not the like been your condition? Many of you have been ſoldiers, driven from houſe and home, endured a life of trouble and blood, being deprived of miniſtry and means: did you not reckon up all the comforts you ſhould have at your return; and glad your hearts with ſuch thoughts, more than with the thoughts of your coming to heaven? Why, what wonder if God now croſs you, and turn ſome of your joy into ſadneſs? Many a ſervant of God hath been deſtroyed from the earth, by being over-valued and over-loved. I pray God you may take warning for the time to come, that you rob not yourſelves of all your mercies. I am perſuaded, our diſcontents and murmurings are not ſo provoking to God, nor ſo deſtructive to the ſinner, as our too ſweet enjoying, and Reſt of ſpirit, in a pleaſing ſtate. If God hath croſſed any of you in wife, children, goods, friends, either by taking them from you, or the comfort from them: try whether this be not the cauſe; for whereſoever your deſires ſtop, and you ſay, Now I am well; that condition you make your god, and engage the jealouſy of God againſt it. Whether you be friends to God or enemies, you can never expect that God ſhould ſuffer you quietly to enjoy your ido's.

4. Conſider, if God ſhould ſuffer thee thus to take up thy reſt here, it were one of the greateſt curſes that could befal thee; it were better for thee if thou never hadſt a day of eaſe in the world; for then wearineſs might make thee ſeek after true reſt. But if he ſhould ſuffer thee to ſit down and reſt here, where were thy reſt when

this deceives thee? A restless wretch thou wouldst be through all eternity. To have their good things on the earth, is the lot of the most miserable perishing sinners. Doth it become christians then to expect so much here? Our rest is in heaven; and where we take our rest, there we make our heaven; and wouldst thou have but such a heaven as this? It will be but a handful of waters to a man that is drowning, which will help to destroy, but not to save him.

5. Consider, thou seekest rest where it is not to be found, and so wilt lose all thy labour. I think I shall evince this by these clear demonstrations following:

First. Our rest is only in the full obtaining our ultimate end; but that is not to be expected in this life. Is God to be enjoyed in the best reformed church here, as he is in heaven? You confess he is not. How little of God, not only the multitude of the blind world, but sometimes the saints themselves enjoy! and how poor comforters are the best ordinances and enjoyments without God? Should a traveller take up his Rest in the way? No, because his home is his journey's end. When you have all that creatures and means can afford, have you that you sought for? Have you that you believe, pray, suffer for? I think you dare not say so. Why then do we once dream of resting here? We are like little children strayed from home; and God is now fetching us home; and we are ready to turn into any house, stay and play with every thing in our way, and sit down on every green bank, and much ado there is to get us home.

Secondly. As we have not yet obtained our end, so are we in the midst of labours and dangers; and is there any resting here? What painful work doth lie upon our hands? Look to our brethren, to our souls, to God; and what a deal of work in respect of each of these doth lie before us! And can we rest in our labours? Indeed we may ease ourselves

ourselves sometimes in our troubles; but that is not the Rest we are now speaking of: we may rest on earth, as the ark is said to rest in the midst of *Jordan*, Josh. iii. 13. Or as the angels of heaven are desired to turn in, and rest them on earth. Gen. xviii. 4. They would have been loath to have taken up their dwelling there. Should *Israel* have settled his rest in the wilderness. among serpents and enemies, and weariness and famine? Should *Noah* have made the ark his home, and been loath to come forth when the waters were fallen? Should the mariner chuse his dwelling on the sea, and settle his rest in the midst of rocks, and sands, and tempests? Though he may adventure through all these for a commodity of worth; yet I think he takes it not for his Rest. Should a soldier rest in the midst of a fight, when he is in the very thickest of his enemies? And are not christians such travellers, such mariners, such soldiers? Have you not fears within, and troubles without? Are we not in the thickest of continual dangers? We cannot eat, drink, sleep, labour, pray, hear, or confer, but in the midst of snares; and shall we sit down and rest here? O christian, follow thy work, look to thy danger, hold on to the end; win the field. and quit the ground, before you think of settling to rest. I read that Christ when he was on the cross, comforted the converted thief with this, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." But if he had only comforted him with telling him, that he should rest there on the cross, would he not have taken it for a derision? Methinks it should be ill rest in the midst of sicknesses and pains, persecution and distresses; one would think it should be no contented dwelling for lambs among wolves. I say, therefore to every one that thinketh of rest on earth, "Arise ye, depart, this is not your rest."

6. Consult with experience, both other mens and your own; many thousands have made trial, but did ever one of these find a sufficient rest for his soul on earth? Delights I deny not but they have

have found: but reſt and ſatisfaction they never found: and ſhall we think to find that, which none ever could find before us? *Ahab's* kingdom is nothing to him, except he had alſo *Naboth's* vineyard, and did that ſatisfy him when he had obtained it? If we had conquered the whole world, we ſhould perhaps do as *Alexander*, ſit down and weep, becauſe there was never another world to conquer. Go aſk honour, Is there Reſt here? Why, you may as well reſt on the top of the tempeſtuous mountains, or in *Ætna's* flames. Aſk riches, Is there reſt here? Even ſuch as is in a bed of thorns. Enquire of worldly pleaſure and eaſe, can they give you any tidings of true Reſt? Even ſuch as the fiſh in ſwallowing the bait; when the pleaſure is ſweeteſt, death is the neareſt. Such is the reſt that all worldly pleaſures afford. Go to learning, to the pureſt, plentifulleſt, powerfulleſt ordinances, or compaſs ſea and land to find out the moſt perfect church; and enquire whether there your ſoul may reſt? You might happily receive from theſe an olive branch of hope, as they are means to your reſt, and have relation to eternity; but in regard of any ſatisfaction in themſelves, you would remain as reſtleſs as ever. O how well might all theſe anſwer us as *Jacob* did *Rachael*, *Am I inſtead of God?* So may the higheſt perfections on earth ſay, Are we inſtead of God? Go take a view of all eſtates of men in the world, and ſee whether any of them have found this reſt. Go to the huſbandman, behold his endleſs labours, his continual care and toil, and wearineſs, and you will eaſily ſee that there is no reſt; go to the tradeſman, and you will find the like: If I ſhould ſend you lower, you would judge your labour loſt: go to the painful miniſter, and there you will yet more eaſily be ſatisfied; for though his ſpending, endleſs labours are exceeding ſweet, yet it is not becauſe they are his reſt, but in reference to his people's and his own eternal reſt. If you would aſcend to magiſtracy, and enquire at the throne, you would find there is no condition ſo reſtleſs. Doubtleſs neither

neither court nor country, towns or cities, ſhops or fields, treaſuries, libraries, ſolitarineſs, ſociety, ſtudies, or pupils, can afford any ſuch thing as this reſt. If you could enquire of the dead of all generations, or if you could aſk the living through all dominions, they would all tell you, Here is no Reſt; and all mankind may ſay, *All our days are ſorrow, and our labour is grief, and our hearts take no Reſt.* Eccleſ. ii. 23.

If other mens experiences move you not, do but take a view of your own: can you remember the eſtate that did fully ſatisfy you? Or, if you could, will it prove a laſting ſtate? For my own part, I have run through ſeveral ſtates of life, and though I never had the neceſſities which might occaſion diſcontent, yet I did never find a ſettlement for my ſoul; and I believe we may all ſay of our Reſt, as Paul of our hopes. *If it were in this life only, we are of all men moſt miſerable.* If then either ſcripture or reaſon, or the experience of ourſelves, and all the world, will ſatisfy us, we may ſee there is no reſting place here. And yet how guilty are the generality of us of this ſin! How many halts and ſtops do we make, before we will make the Lord our reſt! How muſt God even drive us, and fire us out of every condition, leſt we ſhould ſit down and reſt there! If he gives us proſperity, riches, or honour, we do in our hearts dance before them, as the Iſraelites before their calf, and ſay, *Theſe are thy gods*, and conclude it is good being here. If he imbitter all theſe by croſſes, how do we ſtrive to have the croſs removed, and are reſtleſs till our condition be ſweetened to us, that we may ſit down again and reſt where we were. If the Lord, ſeeing our perverſeneſs, ſhould now proceed in the cure, and take the creature quite away, then how do we labour, and care, and cry, and pray, that God would reſtore it, that we may make it our Reſt again! And while we are deprived of its enjoyment, and have not our formal idol, yet rather than come to God, we delight ourſelves in our hopes of recovering

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our former state; and as long as there is the least likelihood of obtaining it, we make those very hopes our rest. If the poor, by labouring all their days, have got hopes of a fuller estate when they are old (though an hundred to one they die before they have obtained it) yet do they rest themselves on these expectations. Or if God doth take away both present enjoyments, and all hopes of recovering them, how do we search about, from creature to creature, to find out something to supply the room, and to settle upon instead thereof? Yea, if we can find no supply, but are sure we shall live in poverty, in sickness, in disgrace, while we are on earth, yet will we rather settle in this misery, and make a rest of a wretched being, than we will leave all, and come to God.

A man would think, that a multitude of poor people who beg their bread, or can scarce with their hardest labour have sustenance for their lives, should easily be driven from resting here, and willingly look to heaven for rest; and the sick, who have not a day of ease, nor any hope of recovery left them. But O the cursed averseness of our souls from God! We will rather account our misery our happiness, yea, that which we daily groan under as intolerable, the soul would rather take up its rest there, than come to God. Yea, when he is bringing us over to him, and hath convinced us of the worth of his ways and service, the last deceit of all is here—we will rather settle upon those ways that lead to him, and those ordinances that speak of him, and those gifts which flow from him, than we will come clean over to himself.

Marvel not that I speak so much of resting in these: beware lest it prove thy own case. I suppose thou art so convinced of the vanity of riches, and honour, and pleasure, that thou canst more easily disclaim these: but for thy spiritual helps, thou lookest on these with less suspicion, and thinkest thou canst not delight in them too much, especially seeing most of the world despise them,

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or delight in them too little. But doth not the increase of those helps dull thy longings after heaven? I know the means of grace must be loved and valued; and he that delighteth in any worldly thing more than in them, is not a christian. But when we are content with duty instead of God, and had rather be at a sermon than in heaven; and a member of a church here than of that perfect church, and rejoice in ordinances but as they are part of our earthly prosperity: this is a sad mistake.

So far rejoice in the creature, as it comes from God, or leads to him, or brings thee some report of his love: so far let thy soul take comfort in ordinances as God doth accompany them, or gives himself unto thy soul by them: still remembering, when thou hast even what thou dost most desire, yet this is not heaven; yet these are but the first-fruits. It is not enough that God alloweth us all the comfort of travellers, and accordingly to rejoice in all his mercies, but we must set up our staff as if we were at home! While we are present in the body, we are absent from the Lord; and while we are absent from him, we are absent from our Rest. If God were as willing to be absent from us, as we from him, and if he were as loath to be our Rest, as we are loath to rest in him, we should be left to an eternal restless separation. In a word, as you are sensible of the sinfulness of your earthly discontents, so be you also of your irregular contents, and pray God to pardon them much more. And above all the plagues and judgments of God on this side hell, see that you watch and pray against this of settling any where short of heaven, or reposing your souls on any thing below God: or else when the bough which you tread on breaks, and the things which you rest upon deceive you, you will perceive your labour all lost, and your highest hopes will make you ashamed. Try if you can perswade Satan to leave tempting, and the world to cease troubling and seducing; if you can bring the glory of God from above, or remove

remove the court from heaven to earth, and ſecure the continuance of this through eternity, then ſettle yourſelves below, and ſay, Soul take thy reſt here: but till then admit no ſuch thought.

CHAP. II.

Motives to Heavenly-mindedneſs.

WE have now by the guidance of the word of the Lord, and by the aſſiſtance of his Spirit, ſhewed you the nature of the Reſt of the Saints; and acquainted you with ſome duties in relation thereto. We come now to the cloſe of all, to preſs you to the great duty which I chiefly intended when I began this ſubject.

Is there a Reſt, and ſuch a Reſt remaining for us? Why then are our thoughts no more upon it? Why are not our hearts continually there? Why dwell we not there in conſtant contemplation? Aſk your hearts in good earneſt, What is the cauſe of this neglect? Hath the eternal God provided us ſuch a glory, and promiſed to take us up to dwell with himſelf? And is not this worth thinking on? Should not the ſtrongeſt deſires of our hearts be after it; and the daily delights of our ſouls be there? Can we forget and neglect it? What is the matter? Will not God give us leave to approach this light? Or will he not ſuffer our ſouls to taſte and ſee it? Then what mean all his earneſt invitations? Why then doth he ſo condemn our earthly-mindedneſs, and command us to ſet our affections above? If the fore-thoughts of glory were forbidden fruits, perhaps we ſhould be ſooner drawn unto them. Sure I am, where God hath forbidden us to place our thoughts and our delights, thither it is eaſy enough to draw them. If he ſay, love not the world, nor the things

things of the world, we doat upon it nevertheleſs. How unweariedly can we think of vanity, and day after day employ our minds about it? And have we no thought of this our Reſt? How freely and frequently can we think of our pleaſures, our friends, our labours, our fleſh, our ſtudies, our news; yea, our very miſeries, our wrongs, our ſufferings, and our fears? But where is the chriſtian whoſe heart is on his reſt? What is the matter? Why are we not taken up with the views of glory, and our ſouls more accuſtomed to theſe delightful meditations? Are we ſo full of joy that we need no more; or is there no matter in heaven for our joyous thoughts; or rather, are not our hearts carnal and blockiſh? Earth will tend to earth. Had we more ſpirit, it would be otherwiſe with us. As St. *Auguſtin* caſt by *Cicero*'s writings, becauſe they contained not the name of *Jeſus;* ſo let us humble and caſt down theſe ſenſual hearts, that have in them no more of Chriſt and glory. As we ſhould not own our duties any further than ſomewhat of Chriſt is in them, ſo ſhould we no further our own hearts: and as we ſhould delight in the creatures no longer than they have reference to Chriſt and eternity, ſo no further ſhould we approve of our own hearts. Why did Chriſt pronounce his diſciples eyes and ears bleſſed, but as they were doors to let in Chriſt by his works and words into their heart? Bleſſed are the eyes that ſo ſee, and the ears that ſo hear, that the heart is thereby raiſed to this heavenly frame. Sirs, ſo much of your hearts as is empty of *Chriſt* and heaven, let it be filled with ſhame and ſorrow, and not with eaſe.

But let me turn my reprehenſion to exhortation, that you would turn this conviction into reformation. And I have the more hope, becauſe I here addreſs myſelf to men of conſcience, that dare not wilfully diſobey God; yea, becauſe to men whoſe portion is there, whoſe hopes are there, and who have forſaken all that they may enjoy this glory; and ſhall I be diſcouraged from perſuadiug ſuch to be

be heavenly-minded? If you will not hear and obey, who will? Whoever thou art therefore that readeſt theſe lines, I require thee, as thou tendereſt thine allegiance to the God of heaven, as ever thou hopeſt for a part in this glory, that thou preſently take thy heart to taſk; chide it for its wilful ſtrangeneſs to God; turn thy thought from the purſuit of vanity, bend thy ſoul to ſtudy eternity; habituate thyſelf to ſuch contemplations, and let not thoſe thoughts be ſeldom and curſory, but ſettle upon them; dwell here, bathe thyſelf in heaven's delights; drench thine affections in theſe rivers of pleaſure; and if thy backward ſoul begin to flag, and thy thoughts to fly abroad, call them back, hold them to their work, put them on, bear not with their lazineſs; and when thou haſt once tried this work, and followed on till thou haſt got acquainted with it, and kept a cloſe guard upon thy thoughts, till they are accuſtomed to obey, thou wilt then find thyſelf in the ſuburbs of heaven, and as it were in a new world; thou wilt then find that there is ſweetneſs in the work and way of God, and that the life of chriſtianity is a life of joy: thou wilt then meet with thoſe abundant conſolations which thou haſt prayed, and panted, and groaned after, and which ſo few chriſtians obtain, becauſe they know not the way to them, or elſe make not conſcience of walking in it.

You ſee the work now before you: this, this is that I would fain perſuade you to practice: let me beſpeak your conſcience in the name of Chriſt, and command you by the authority I have received from Chriſt, that you faithfully ſet upon this duty, and fix your eye more ſtedfaſtly on your reſt. Do not wonder that I perſuade you ſo earneſtly: though indeed if we were truly reaſonable men, it would be a wonder that men ſhould need ſo much perſuaſion to ſo ſweet and plain a duty: but I know the employment is high, the heart is earthly, and will ſtill draw back; the temptations and hinderances will be many and great, and therefore I fear all theſe perſuaſions are little enough: ſay not, we

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are unable to ſet our own hearts on heaven, this muſt be the work of God: therefore all your exhortation is in vain. I tell you, though God be the chief diſpoſer of your hearts, yet next under him you have the greateſt command of them yourſelves, and a great power in the ordering of your own thoughts, and determining your own wills: though without Chriſt you can do nothing, yet under him you may do much, and muſt do much, or elſe you will be undone through your neglect: do your own parts, and you have no cauſe to diſtruſt whether Chriſt will do his.

I will here lay down ſome conſiderations, which if you will but deliberately weigh with an impartial judgment, I doubt not will prove effectual with your hearts, and make you reſolve upon this excellent duty.

1. Conſider, a heart ſet upon heaven, will be one of the moſt unqueſtionable evidences of a true work of ſaving grace upon thy ſoul. Would you have a ſign infallible, not from me, or from the mouth of any man, but from the mouth of Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, which all the enemies of the uſe of marks can lay no exceptions againſt? Why here is ſuch a one, Matt. vi. 21, *Where your treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo.* Know once aſſuredly where your heart is, and you may eaſily know that your treaſure is there. God is the ſaints treaſure and happineſs: heaven is the place where they fully enjoy him. A heart therefore ſet upon heaven, is no more but a heart ſet upon God, deſiring this full enjoyment: and ſurely a heart ſet upon God through Chriſt, is the trueſt evidence of ſaving grace. Eternal actions are the eaſieſt diſcovered; but thoſe of the heart are the ſureſt evidences. When thy learning will be no good proof of thy grace; when thy knowledge, thy duties, and thy gifts will fail thee, when arguments from thy tongue and thy hand may be confuted; then will this argument from the bent of thy heart prove thee ſincere. Take a poor chriſtian that can ſcarce ſpeak Engliſh about religion, that hath a weak

weak understanding, a failing memory, a stammering tongue, yet his heart is set on God, he hath chosen him for his portion, his thoughts are on eternity, his desires there, his dwelling there; he cries out, O that I were there! He takes that day for a time of imprisonment, wherein he hath not taken one refreshing view of eternity: I had rather die in this man's condition than in the case of him that hath the most eminent gifts, and is most admired for parts and duty, whose heart is not taken up with God. The man that Christ will find out at the last day, and condemn for want of a wedding-garment, will be him that wants this frame of heart. The question will not then be, how much you have known or talked? But how much have you loved, and where was your heart? Why then, as you would have a sure proof of your title to glory, labour to get your hearts above. God will acknowledge you love him, when he sees your hearts are set upon him. Get but your hearts once truly in heaven, and without all question yourselves will follow. If sin and Satan keep not thence your affections, they will never be able to keep away your persons.

2. Consider, a heavenly mind is a joyful mind: this is the nearest and the truest way to comfort; and without this you must needs be uncomfortable. Can a man be at the fire, and not be warm, or in the sunshine, and not have light? Can your hearts be in heaven, and not have comfort? What could make such frozen uncomfortable Christians, but living so far as they do from heaven? And what makes others so warm in comforts, but their frequent access so near to God? When the sun in the spring draws near our part of the earth, how do all things congratulate its approach? The earth looks green, and casteth off her mourning habit? the trees shoot forth; the plants revive; the birds sing, the face of all things smiles upon us, and all the creatures below rejoice. If we would but keep these hearts above, what a spring would be within us; and all our graces be fresh

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and green? How would the face of our souls be changed, and all that is within us rejoice? How should we forget our winter sorrows, and withdraw our souls from our sad retirements? How early should we rise (as those birds in the spring) to sing the praise of our great Creator? O Christian, get above: believe it, that region is warmer than this below. Those that have been there have found it so, and those that have come thence have told us so; and I doubt not but thou hast sometimes tried it thyself. I dare appeal to thy own experience: when is it that you have largest comforts? Is it not after such an exercise as this, when thou hast got up thy heart, and conversed with God, and talked with the inhabitants of the higher world, and viewed the mansions of the saints and angels, and filled thy soul with the forethoughts of glory? If thou knowest by experience what this practice is, I dare say thou knowest what spiritual joy is. If it be the countenance of God that fills us with joy, then they that most behold it, must be fullest of these joys. If you never tried this, nor lived this life of heavenly contemplation, I never wonder that you walk uncomfortably, and know not what the joy of the saints means. Can you have comforts from God, and never think of him? Can heaven rejoice you when you do not remember it? Doth any thing in the world glad you, when you think not on it? Whom should we blame then, that we are so void of consolation, but our own negligent unskilful hearts? God hath provided us a crown of glory, and promised to set it shortly on our heads, and we will not so much as think of it: he holdeth it out to us, and biddeth us behold and rejoice: and we will not so much as look at it. What a perverse course is this, both against God and our own joys!

I confess, though in fleshly things the presenting a comforting object is sufficient to produce an answerable delight, yet in spirituals we are more disabled: God must give the joy itself, as well as afford

ford us matter for joy: but yet withal, it muſt be remembered, that God doth work upon us as men, and in a rational way doth raiſe our comforts: he enableth and exciteth us to mind theſe delightful objects, and from thence to gather our own comforts: therefore he that is moſt ſkilful and ſkilful in this gathering art, is uſually the fulleſt of the ſpiritual ſweetneſs. It is by believing that we are filled with joy and peace; and no longer than we continue our believing. It is in hope that the Saints rejoice, yea, in this hope of the glory of God; and no longer than they continue hoping. And here let me warn you of a dangerous ſnare, an opinion which will rob you of all your comfort: ſome think, if they ſhould thus fetch in their own by believing and hoping, and work it out of ſcripture-promiſes by their own thinking and ſtudying, then it would be a comfort only of their own hammering out (as they ſay) and not the genuine joy of the Holy Ghoſt. A deſperate miſtake, raiſed upon a ground that would overthrow almoſt all duty, as well as this; which is their ſetting the workings of God's Spirit and their own ſpirits in oppoſition, when their ſpirits muſt ſtand in ſubordination to God's: they are conjunct cauſes, co-operating to the producing of one and the ſame effect. God's Spirit worketh our comforts, by ſetting our own ſpirits at work upon the promiſes, and raiſing our thoughts to the place of our own comforts. As you would delight a covetous man by ſhewing him money, or a voluptuous man with fleſhly delights; ſo God uſeth to delight his people, by taking them as it were by the hand, and leading them into heaven, and ſhewing them not himſelf, and their Reſt with Him. God uſeth not to caſt in our joys while we are idle, or taken up with other things. It is true, he ſometimes doth it ſuddenly, but uſually in the aforeſaid order: and his ſometimes ſudden, extraordinary caſting of comforting thoughts in our hearts, ſhould be ſo far from hindering endeavours in a meditating

way, that it ſhould be a ſingular motive to quicken us to it; even as a taſte given us of ſome cordial, will make us deſire and ſeek the reſt. God feedeth not ſaints as birds do their young, bringing it to them, and putting it in their mouth, while they lie ſtill in the neſt, and only gape to receive it: but as he giveth to man the fruits of the earth, the increaſe of our land in corn and wine, while we plow and ſow, and weed, and water, and dung, and dreſs, and then with patience expect his bleſſing; ſo doth he give the joys of the ſoul. Yet I deny not, that if any ſhould think, to work out his own comforts by meditation, to attempt the work in his own ſtrength, the work would prove to be like the workman, and the comfort he would gather would be like both; even mere vanity; even as the huſbandman's labour, without the ſun, and rain, and bleſſing of God.

So then you may eaſily ſee, that cloſe meditation on the matter and cauſe of your joy, is God's way to procure ſolid joy. For my part, if I ſhould find my joy of another kind, I ſhould be very prone to doubt of its ſincerity. If I find a great deal of comfort, and know not how it came, nor upon what rational ground it was raiſed, nor what conſiderations feed and continue it, I ſhould be ready to queſtion whether this be from God? Our love to God ſhould not be like that of fond lovers, who love violently, but they know not why. I think a Chriſtian's joy ſhould be rational joy, and not to rejoice and know not why. In ſome extraordinary caſe, God may caſt in ſuch an extraordinary kind of joy; yet it is not his uſual way. And if you obſerve the ſpirit of moſt comfortable Chriſtians, you will find the reaſon to be the expectation of ſuch kind of joys; and accordingly are their ſpirits variouſly toſſed, and unconſtantly tempered: when they meet with ſuch joys, then theſe are cheerful and lifted up; but becauſe they are uſually ſhort lived, therefore they are ſtraight as low as hell. And thus they are toſſed as a veſſel at ſea, up and down, but ſtill in ex-

tremes: whereas, alas! God is moſt conſtant, *Chriſt* the ſame, Heaven the ſame, and the promiſe the ſame; and if we took the right courſe for fetching in our comforts from theſe, ſure our comforts would be more ſettled and conſtant, though not always the ſame. Whoever thou art therefore that readeſt theſe lines, I entreat thee in the name of the Lord, and as thou valueſt the life of conſtant joy, and that good conſcience, which is a continual feaſt, that thou wouldſt ſeriouſly ſet upon this work, and learn the art of heavenly-mindedneſs, and thou ſhalt find the increaſe an hundred fold.

3. Conſider a heart in heaven will be a moſt excellent preſervative againſt temptations, and a powerful means to ſave the conſcience from the wounds of ſin: God can prevent our ſinning, though we be careleſs, and ſometimes doth; but this is not his uſual courſe; nor is this our ſafeſt way to eſcape. When the mind is either idle, or ill employed, the devil needs not a greater advantage: if he find but the mind empty, there is room for any thing that he will bring in; but when he finds the heart in heaven, what hope that his motions ſhould take? Let him entice to any forbidden courſe, the ſoul will return *Nehemiah*'s anſwer, *I am doing a great work, and cannot come*, Neh. vi. 3. Several ways will this preſerve us againſt temptation. *Firſt*, By keeping the heart employed, *Secondly*, By clearing the underſtanding, and confirming the will. *Thirdly*, By pre-poſſeſſing the affections. *Fourthly*, By keeping us in the way of God's bleſſing.

Firſt, By keeping the heart employed: when we are idle, we tempt the devil to tempt us, as it is an encouragement to a thief, to ſee your doors open, and no body within; and as we uſe to ſay, "careleſs perſon makes thieves;" ſo it will encourage *Satan*, to find your hearts idle; but when the heart is taken up with God, it cannot have time to hearken to temptations; it cannot have

time to be luſtful and wanton, ambitious or worldly.

If you were but buſied in your lawful callings, you would not be ſo ready to hearken to temptations: much leſs if you were buſied above with God. Will you leave your plow and harveſt in the field? Or leave the quenching of a fire in your houſes, to run hunting of butterflies? Would a judge riſe when he is ſitting upon life and death, to go and play among the boys in the ſtreets? No more will a Chriſtian, when he is buſy with God, give ear to the alluring charms of *Satan*. The love of God is never idle; it worketh great things where it truly is; and when it will not work, it is not love. Therefore being ſtill thus working, it is ſtill preſerving.

Secondly, A heavenly mind is freeſt from ſin, becauſe it is of cleareſt underſtanding in ſpiritual matters. A man that is much in converſing above, hath truer and livelier apprehenſions of things concerning God and his ſoul, than any reading or learning can beget: though perhaps he may be ignorant in divers controverſies, and matters that leſs concern ſalvation: yet thoſe truths which muſt eſtabliſh his ſoul, and preſerve him from temptation, he knows far better than the greateſt ſcholars: he hath ſo deep an inſight into the evil of ſin, the vanity of the creature, the brutiſhneſs of ſenſual delights: that temptations have little power on him; for theſe earthly vanities are *Satan*'s baits, which with the clear-ſighted have loſt their force. *In vain* (ſaith *Solomon*) *the net is ſpread in the ſight of any bird:* and in vain doth *Satan* lay his ſnares to entrap the ſoul that plainly ſees them. When the heavenly mind is above with God, he may from thence diſcern every danger that lies below: nay, if he did not diſcover the ſnare, yet were he likelier to eſcape it than any others. A net or bait that is laid on the ground, is unlikely to catch the bird that flies in the air; while ſhe keeps above, ſhe is out of the

danger, and the higher the ſafer; ſo it is with us, *Satan*'s temptations are laid on the earth, earth is the place, and earth is the ordinary bait; how ſhall theſe enſnare the Chriſtian, who hath left the earth, and walks with God?

Do you not ſenſibly perceive, that when your hearts are ſeriouſly fixed on heaven, you become wiſer than before? Are not your underſtandings more ſolid; and your thoughts more ſober? Have you not truer apprehenſions of things than you had? For my own part, if I ever be wiſe, it is when I have been much above, and ſeriouſly ſtudied the life to come: methinks I find my underſtanding after ſuch contemplations, as much to differ from what it was before, as before I differed from a fool or an idiot: when my underſtanding is weakened and befooled with common employment, and with converſing long with the vanities below, methinks a few ſober thoughts of my father's houſe, and the bleſſed proviſion of his family in heaven, make me (with the prodigal) to come to myſelf again. Surely when a chriſtian withdraws himſelf from his earthly thoughts, and begins to converſe with God in heaven, he is a *Nebuchadnezzar*, taken from the beaſts of the field to the throne, and his underſtanding returneth to him again. O, when a chriſtian hath had but a glimpſe of eternity, and then looks down on the world again! How doth he ſay to his laughter, *Thou art mad!* and to his vain mirth, *What doſt thou?* How could he even tear his fleſh, and take revenge on himſelf for his folly! How verily doth he think that there is no man in Bedlam ſo mad, as wilful ſinners, and lazy betrayers of their own ſouls, and unworthy ſlighters of Chriſt and glory.

Do you not think (except men are ſtark devils) that it would be a harder matter to entice a man to ſin, when he lies a dying, than it was before? If the devil, or his inſtruments, ſhould then tell him of a cup of ſack, of merry company, or of a ſtage-play, do you think he would then be ſo taken with the

the motion? If he ſhould then tell him of riches, or honours, or ſhew him cards or dice, or a whore, would the temptation (think you) be as ſtrong as before? Would he not anſwer, Alas! what is all this to me, who muſt preſently appear before God, and give account of all my life, and ſtraightways be in another world? Why, if the apprehenſion of the nearneſs of eternity will work ſuch ſtrange effects upon the ungodly, and make them wiſer than to be deceived ſo eaſily, as they were wont to be in time of health; what effects would it work in thee, if thou couldſt always dwell in the views of God, and in lively thoughts of thine everlaſting ſtate? Surely, a believer, if he improves his faith, may have truer apprehenſions of the life to come, in the time of his health, than an unbeliever hath at the hour of his death.

Thirdly, A heavenly mind is fortified againſt temptations, becauſe the affections are pre-poſſeſſed with the delights of another world. When the ſoul is not affected with good, though the underſtanding never ſo clearly apprehend the truth, it is eaſy for Satan to entice that ſoul. Mere ſpeculations (be they ever ſo true) which ſink not into the affections, are poor preſervatives againſt temptations. He that loves moſt, and not he that knows moſt will eaſieſt reſiſt the motions of ſin. There is in a chriſtian a kind of ſpiritual ſtate, whereby he knows theſe things, beſides his mere reaſoning power; the will doth as ſweetly reliſh goodneſs, as the underſtanding doth truth: and here lies much of a chriſtian's ſtrength. If you ſhould diſpute with a ſimple man, and labour to perſuade him that ſugar is not ſweet, or that wormwood is not bitter; perhaps you might by ſophiſtry, over-argue his mere reaſon, but yet you could not perſuade him againſt his ſenſe; whereas a man that hath loſt his taſte, is eaſier deceived for all his reaſon. So it is here. When thou haſt had a freſh delightful taſte of heaven, thou wilt not be ſo eaſily perſuaded from it: you

cannot perſuade a very child to part with his apple, while the taſte of its ſweetneſs is yet in his mouth.

O that you would be perſuaded to be much in feeding on the hidden manna, and to be frequently taſting the delights of heaven. It is true, it is a great way off from our ſenſe, but faith can reach as far as that. How would this raiſe thy reſolutions, and make thee laugh at the fooleries of the world, and ſcorn to be cheated with ſuch childiſh toys? What if the devil had ſet upon *Paul* when he was in the third heaven? Could he then have perſuaded his heart to the pleaſures, or profits, or honours of the world. Though the *Iſraelites* below may be enticed to idolatry, and from eating and drinking riſe up to play; yet *Moſes* in the mount with God will not do ſo: and if they had been where he was, and had but ſeen what he there ſaw, perhaps they would not ſo eaſily have ſinned. O, if we could keep our ſouls continually delighted with the ſweetneſs above, with what diſdain ſhould we ſpit at the baits of ſin?

Fourthly, Whilſt the heart is ſet on heaven, a man is under God's protection; and therefore if Satan then aſſault him, God is more engaged for his defence.

Let me entreat thee then, if thou be a man that is haunted with temptation (as doubtleſs thou art, if thou be a man) if thou perceive thy danger, and would fain eſcape it; uſe much this powerful remedy, keep cloſe with God by a heavenly mind; and when the temptation comes, go ſtraight to heaven, and turn thy thoughts to higher things; thou ſhalt find this a ſurer help than the other. Follow your buſineſs above with Chriſt, and keep your thoughts to their heavenly employment, and you ſooner will this way vanquiſh the temptation, than if you argued or talked it out with the tempter.

4. Conſider, The diligent keeping of your hearts on heaven, will preſerve the vigour of all your graces,

graces, and put life into your duties. It is the heavenly chriſtian, that is the lively chriſtian: it is our ſtrangeneſs to heaven that makes us ſo dull: it is the end that quickens all the means: and the more frequently and clearly this end is beheld, the more vigorous will all our motions be. How doth it make men unweariedly labour, and fearleſsly venture, when they do but think of the gainful prize? How will the ſoldier hazard his life? and the mariner paſs through ſtorms and waves? How cheerfully do they compaſs ſea and land, when they think of an uncertain periſhing treaſure? O, what life then would it put in a chriſtian's endeavours, if he would frequently think of his everlaſting treaſure? We run ſo ſlowly, and ſtrive ſo lazily, becauſe we ſo little mind the prize. When a chriſtian hath been taſting the hidden manna, and drinking of the ſtreams of the paradiſe of God, what life doth this put into him? How fervent will his ſpirit be in prayer, when he conſiders that he prays for no leſs than heaven?

Obſerve but the man who is much in heaven, and you will ſee he is not like others: there is ſomewhat of that which he hath ſeen above, appeareth in all his duty and converſation; nay, take but the ſame man immediately when he is returned from theſe views of bliſs, and you may eaſily perceive he excels himſelf. If he be a preacher, how heavenly are his ſermons? What clear deſcriptions, what high expreſſions hath he of that reſt? If he be a private chriſtian, what heavenly conference? What heavenly prayers? What an heavenly carriage hath he? May you not even hear in a preacher's ſermons, or in the private duties of another, when they have been moſt above? When Moſes had been with God in the mount, it made his face ſhine, that the people could not behold him. If you would but ſet upon this employment, even ſo would it be with you: men would ſee the face of your converſation ſhine, and ſay, *ſurely he hath been with* God.

It is true, a heavenly nature goes before this heavenly employment; but yet the work will make it more heavenly: there muſt be life, before we can feed; but our life is continued and increaſed by feeding. Therefore, let me inform thee, if thou lie complaining of deadneſs and dullneſs, that thou canſt not love Chriſt, nor rejoice in his love: that thou haſt no life in prayer, nor any other duty, and yet triedſt this quickening courſe, or at leaſt art careleſs and inconſtant in it; thou art the cauſe of thy own complaints; thou dulleſt thine own heart, thou denieſt thyſelf that life which thou talkeſt of. Is not *thy life hid with* Chriſt *in* God? Whither muſt thou go but to heaven, where he is? *Thou wilt not come to Chriſt, that thou mayeſt have life.* If thou wouldſt have light and heat, why art thou then no more in the ſun ſhine? If thou wouldſt have more of that grace which flows from Chriſt, why art thou no more with Chriſt for it? Thy ſtrength is in heaven, and thy life in heaven, and thence thou muſt daily fetch it, if thou wilt have it. For want of this recourſe to heaven, thy ſoul is as a candle that is not lighted, and thy duties as a ſacrifice which hath no fire. Fetch one coal daily from this altar, and ſee if thy offering will not burn. Light thy candle at this flame, and feed it daily with oil from hence, and ſee if it will not glorioufly ſhine: keep cloſe to this reviving fire, and ſee if thy affections will not be warmer. Thou bewaileſt thy want of love to God (and well thou mayeſt, for it is a heinous crime, a killing ſin) why, lift up the eye of faith to heaven, behold his beauty, contemplate his excellencies, and ſee whether his amiableneſs will not fire thy affections, and his goodneſs raviſh thy heart. As the eye doth incenſe the ſenſual affections, by gazing on alluring objects; ſo doth the eye of faith in meditation, enflame our affections towards our Lord, by gazing on that higheſt beauty. Whoever thou art, thou art a ſtranger to this employment, be thy parts and profeſſion ever ſo great, let me tell thee, thou ſpeedeſt thy life but in trifling and idleneſs; thou

thou ſeemeſt to live, but thou art dead: I may ſay of thee, as *Seneca* of idle *Vacia*, *Scis, latere, vivere neſcis;* thou knoweſt how to lurk in idleneſs, but how to live thou knoweſt not. And as the ſame *Seneca* would ſay, when he paſſed by that ſluggard's dwelling, *Ibi ſitus eſt Vacia;* ſo it it may be ſaid of thee, there lies ſuch a one, but not there lives ſuch a one, for thou ſpendeſt thy days more like the dead than the living. One of *Draco*'s laws to the *Athenians* was, that he who was convicted of idleneſs, ſhould be put to death: thou doſt execute this on thy own ſoul, whilſt by thy idleneſs thou deſtroyeſt its life.

Thou mayſt many other ways exerciſe thy parts, but this is the way to exerciſe thy graces: they all come from God as their fountain, and lead to God as their end, and are exerciſed on God as their chief object: ſo that God is their all in all. From heaven they come, and to heaven they will direct and move thee. And as exerciſe maintaineth appetite, ſtrength and livelineſs to the body: ſo doth it alſo to the ſoul. *Uſe limbs and have limbs*, is the known proverb. And uſe grace and ſpiritual life in theſe heavenly exerciſes, and you ſhall find it quickly cauſe their increaſe. The exerciſe of your mere abilities of ſpeech will not much advantage your graces; but the exerciſe of thoſe heavenly gifts, will inconceivably help the growth of both: for as the moon is then moſt full and glorious, when it doth moſt directly face the ſun; ſo will your ſouls be both in gifts and graces, when you moſt nearly view the face of God. This will feed your tongue with matter, and make you abound and overflow, both in preaching, praying, and conferring. Beſides the fire which you fetch from heaven for your ſacrifices, is no falſe or ſtrange fire: as your livelineſs will be much more; ſo it will be alſo more ſincere.

The zeal which is kindled by your meditations on heaven, is moſt likely to prove a heavenly zeal; and the livelineſs of the ſpirit which you fetch from the face of God, muſt needs be the

divineſt life. Some men's fervency is drawn only from their books, and ſome from ſtinging affliction, and ſome from the mouth of a moving miniſter, and ſome from the encouragement of an attentive auditory; but he that knows his way to heaven, and derives it daily from the pure Fountain, ſhall have his ſoul revived with the water of life, and enjoy that quickening which is the ſaints, peculiar privilege. By this faith thou mayeſt offer *Abel*'s ſacrifice, more excellent than that of common men, and by it obtain witneſs that thou art righteous, *God teſtifying of thy gifts*, Heb. xi. 4, when others are ready, as *Baal*'s prieſts, to beat themſelves, and cut their fleſh, becauſe their ſacrifice will not burn: then if thou canſt but get the ſpirit of *Elias*, and in the chariot of contemplation ſoar aloft, till thou approacheſt near to the quickening ſpirit, thy ſoul and ſacrifice will glorioufly flame, though the fleſh and the world ſhould caſt upon them the water of all their enmity. Say not now, How ſhall we get ſo high? Or how can mortals aſcend to heaven? For faith hath wings, and meditation is its chariot; its office is to make abſent things as preſent. Do you not ſee how a little piece of glaſs, if it do but rightly face the ſun, will ſo contract its beams and heat, as to ſet on fire that which is behind it, which without it would have received but little warmth? Why thy faith is as the burning-glaſs to thy ſacrifice, and meditation ſets it to face the ſun; only take it not away too ſoon, but hold it there awhile, and thy ſoul will feel the happy effect.

If we could get the Holy of Holies, and bring thence the name and image of God, and get it cloſed up in our hearts, this would enable us to work wonders; every duty we performed would be a wonder; and they that heard would be ready to ſay, Never man ſpake as this man ſpeaketh. The ſpirit would poſſeſs us, as thoſe flaming tongues, and make us every one ſpeak (not in the variety of the confounded languages, but) in the primitive, pure language of *Canaan*, the wonderful

ful works of God. We ſhould then be in every duty, whether prayer, exhortation, or brotherly reproof, as *Paul* was at *Athens*, his ſpirit was ſtirred within him; and ſhould be ready to ſay, as *Jeremiah* did, Jer. xx. 9. *His word was in my heart as a burning fire ſhut up in my bones; and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not ſtay.*

Chriſtian reader, art thou not thinking then thou ſeeſt a lively believer, and heareſt his melting prayers, and raviſhing diſcourſe: O how happy a man is this! O that my ſoul were in his ſtate! Why, I here direct and adviſe thee from God. Try this courſe, and ſet thy ſoul to this work, and thou ſhalt be in as good a caſe. Waſh thee frequently in this *Jordan*, and thy dead ſoul ſhall revive, and thou ſhall know there is a God in *Iſrael;* and that thou mayeſt live a vigorous and joyful life, if thou truly value this ſtrong and active frame of ſpirit, ſhew it by the preſent attempting this heavenly exerciſe. Thou haſt heard the way to obtain this life in thy ſoul, and in thy duties, if thou wilt yet neglect it, blame thyſelf.

But alas, the multitude of profeſſors come to a miniſter, juſt as *Naaman* came to *Elias*; they aſk us, How ſhall I overcome a hard heart, and get ſtrength of life and grace? But they expect that ſome eaſy means ſhould do it; and think we ſhould cure them with the very anſwer to their queſtion, and teach them a way to be quickly well: but when they hear of a daily trading in heaven, and conſtant meditation on the joys above: this is a greater taſk than they expected and they turn their backs, as *Naaman* to *Elias*, or the young man on Chriſt. Will not preaching, and praying, and conference ſerve (ſay they) without this dwelling ſtill in heaven? I intreat thee, Reader, beware of this folly; fall to the work: the comfort of ſpiritual health will countervail all the trouble. It is but the fleſh that repines, which thou knoweſt was never a friend to thy ſoul. If God had ſet thee on ſome gracious work, ſhouldſt thou not have done it for the life of

thy ſoul? How much more when he doth but invite thee to himſelf?

5. Conſider, The frequent believing views of glory are the moſt precious cordials in all afflictions. 1. To ſuſtain our ſpirits, and make our ſufferings far more eaſy. 2. To ſtay us from repining. And 3. To ſtrengthen our reſolutions, that we forſake not Chriſt for fear of trouble. A man will more quietly endure the lancing of his ſores, when he thinks on the eaſe that will follow. What then will not a believer endure, when he thinks of the Reſt to which it tendeth? What if the way be never ſo rough? Can it be tedious if it lead to heaven? O ſweet ſickneſs! Sweet reproaches, impriſonments, or death, which is accompanied with theſe taſtes of our future reſt! Believe it, thou wilt ſuffer heavily, thou wilt die moſt ſadly, if thou haſt not at hand the foretaſtes of this reſt. Therefore as thou wilt then be ready with *David* to pray, *be not far from me, for trouble is near:* ſo let it be thy chief care not to be far from God and heaven, when trouble is near, and *thou wilt find him a very preſent help in trouble.*

All ſufferings are nothing to us, as far as we have the foreſight of this ſalvation. No bolts, nor bars, nor diſtance of place can ſhut out theſe ſupporting joys, becauſe they cannot confine our faith and thoughts, although they may confine our fleſh. Chriſt and faith are ſpiritual, and therefore priſons and baniſhments cannot hinder their intercourſe. Even when perſecution and fear hath ſhut the doors, Chriſt can come in and ſtand in the midſt, and ſay, *Peace be unto you.* It is not the place, that gives the reſt, but the preſence and beholding of Chriſt in it, we may walk in the midſt of thoſe flames, which ſhall devour thoſe that caſt us in: why then keep thy ſoul above with Chriſt; be as little as may be out of his company, and then all conditions will be alike to thee. What made *Moſes chuſe affliction with the people of* God, *rather than enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon?*

ſon? He had reſpect to the recompenſe of reward. Yea, our Lord himſelf did fetch his encouragements to ſufferings from the foreſight of his glory: *For to this end he both died and roſe, and revived, that he might be* Lord *of the dead and living,* Rom. xiv. 9. *Even* Jeſus, *the author and finiſher of our faith, for the joy that was ſet before him, endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is ſet down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

6. Conſider, It is he that hath his converſation in heaven, who is the profitable Chriſtian to all about him: with him you take ſweet counſel, and go up to the celeſtial houſe of God. When a man is in a ſtrange country, far from home, how glad is he of the company of one of his own nation? How delightful is it to them to talk of their country, of their acquaintance, and the affairs of their home? Why, with a heavenly Chriſtian thou mayſt have ſuch diſcourſe; for he hath been there in the Spirit, and can tell thee of the glory and Reſt above. To diſcourſe with able men, of clear underſtandings about the difficulties of religion, yea, about languages and ſciences, is both pleaſant and profitable; but nothing to this heavenly diſcourſe of a believer. O how refreſhing are his expreſſions? How his words pierce the heart? How they transform the hearers? *How doth his doctrine drop as the rain, and his ſpeech diſtill as the dew, as the ſmall rain upon the tender herb, and as the ſhowers upon the graſs; while his tongue is expreſſing the name of the* Lord; *and aſcribing greatneſs to his* God? This is the man who is as *Job, when the candle of* God *did ſhine upon his head, and when by his light he walked through darkneſs: when the ſecret of God was upon his tabernacle, and when the Almighty was yet with him: then the ear that heard him did bleſs him; and the eye that ſaw him gave witneſs to him,* Job xxix. 3. 4, 5, 11. Happy the people that have a heavenly miniſter: happy the children and ſervants that have a heavenly father or maſter: happy the man that hath heavenly aſſociates: if they have but hearts to know their happineſs.

This

This is the companion, who will watch over thy ways; who will ſtrengthen thee when thou art weak; who will cheer thee when thou art drooping, and comfort thee with the ſame comforts, wherewith he hath been ſo often comforted himſelf. This is he that will be blowing the ſpark of thy ſpiritual life, and always drawing thy ſoul to God, and will be ſaying to thee, as the *Samaritan* woman, *Come and ſee one that hath told me all that ever I did*, one that hath raviſhed my heart with his beauty, one that hath loved our ſouls to the death: is not this the Chriſt? Is not the knowledge of God and him eternal life? If thou travel with this man on the way, he will be directing and quickening thee in thy journey to heaven: if thou be buying or ſelling, or trading with him in the world, he will be counſelling thee to lay out for the ineſtimable treaſure: if thou wrong him, he can pardon thee, remembering that Chriſt hath not only pardoned great offences to him, but will alſo give him his invaluable portion. This is the chriſtian of the right ſtamp; this is the ſervant that is like his Lord; theſe be the innocent that ſave the Iſland, and all about them are the better where they dwell. I fear the men I have deſcribed are very rare; but were it not for our ſhameful negligence, ſuch men might we all be!

CHAP. III.

Containing ſome Hindrances of Heavenly-mindedneſs.

AS thou valueſt the comforts of a heavenly converſation, I here charge thee from God to beware moſt carefully of theſe impediments.

1. The firſt is, The living in a known ſin. Obſerve this, What havock will this make in thy ſoul! O the joys that this hath deſtroyed! The bleſſed

bleſſed communion with God, that this hath interrupted? The ruins it hath made amongſt men's graces! The duties that it hath hindered! And above all others, it is an enemy to this great duty.

I deſire thee in the fear of God ſtay here a little, and ſearch thy heart. Art thou one that haſt uſed violence with thy conſcience? Art thou a wilful neglecter of known duties, either public or private? Art thou a ſlave to thine appetite in eating or drinking, or to any other commanding ſenſe? Art thou a ſeeker of thine own eſteem, and a man that muſt needs have men's good opinion? Art thou a peeviſh or paſſionate perſon, ready to take fire at every word, or every ſuppoſed ſlight? Art thou a deceiver of others in thy dealing? Or one that hath ſet thyſelf to riſe in the world? Not to ſpeak of greater ſins, which all take notice of. If this be thy caſe, I dare ſay, heaven and thy ſoul are very great ſtrangers; I dare ſay, thou art ſeldom with God, and there is little hopes it ſhould be better, as long as thou continueſt in theſe tranſgreſſions: theſe beams in thine eyes will not ſuffer thee to look to heaven; theſe will be a cloud between thee and God. How ſhouldſt thou take comfort from heaven, who takeſt ſo much pleaſure in the luſts of the fleſh? Every wilful ſin will be to thy comforts as water to fire; when thou thinkeſt to quicken them, this will quench them; when thy heart begins to draw near to God, this will preſently fill thee with doubting. Beſides it doth utterly indiſpoſe thee, and diſable thee to this work; when thou ſhouldſt wind up thy heart to heaven, it is biaſſed another way; it is entangled, and can no more aſcend in divine meditation, than the bird can fly whoſe wings are clipt, or that is taken in the ſnare. Sin doth cut the very ſinews of the ſoul; therefore I ſay of this heavenly life, as Mr. *Bolton* ſaith of prayer, "either it will make thee leave ſinning, or ſin will make thee leave it," and that quickly too: for theſe cannot continue together. If heaven and hell can meet together, then mayſt thou live in

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sin, and in the tastes of glory. If therefore thou find thyself guilty, never doubt but this is the cause that estrangeth thee from heaven; and take heed lest it keep out thee, as it keeps out thy heart. Yea, if thou be a man that hitherto hast escaped, and knowest no reigning sin in thy soul, yet let this warning move thee to prevention, and stir up a dread of this danger in thy spirit, especially resolve to keep from the occasion of sin, and, as much as possible, out of the way of temptation.

2. A second hindrance carefully to be avoided, is an earthly mind: for you may easily conceive, that this cannot stand with a heavenly mind. God and mammon, earth and heaven, cannot both have the delight of thy heart. This makes thee like *Anselem*'s bird, with a stone tied to the foot, which as oft as she took flight, did pluck her to the earth again. If thou be a man that hast fancied to thyself, some happiness to be found on earth, and beginnest to taste a sweetness in gain, and to aspire after a higher estate, and art driving on thy design; believe it, thou art marching with thy back upon Christ, and art posting away apace from this heavenly life. Hath not the world that from thee, which God hath from every believer? When he is blessing himself in God, and rejoicing in hope of the glory to come; then thou art blessing thyself in thy posterity.

It may be thou holdest on thy course of duty, and prayest as oft as thou didst before; it may be thou keepest in with good ministers, and with good men, and seemest as forward in religion as ever: but what is all this to the purpose? Mock not thy soul, man; for God will not be mocked. Thine earthly mind may consist with thy common duties; but it cannot consist with this heavenly duty. I need not tell thee this, if thou wouldst not be a traitor to thy own soul; thou knowest thyself how seldom and cold, how cursory and strange thy thoughts have been of the joys hereafter ever since thou didst trade so eagerly for the world.

Methinks

Methinks I even perceive thy conscience stir now, and tell thee plainly, that this is thy case: hear it, man; O hear it now; lest thou hear it in another manner when thou wouldst be full loth. O the cursed madness of many that seem to be religious! who thrust themselves into the multitude of employments, and think they can never have business enough, till they are loaded with labours, and clogged with cares, that their souls are as unfit to converse with God, as a man to walk with a mountain on his back. And when all is done, and they have lost that heaven they might have had upon earth, they take but a few rotten arguments to prove it lawful, and then they think they have saved all. They miss not the pleasures of this heavenly life, if they can but quiet their consciences, while they fasten upon the lower and baser pleasures.

For thee, O Christian, who hast tasted of these pleasures, I advise thee, as thou valuest their enjoyment, as ever thou wouldst taste of them any more, take heed of this gulph of an earthly mind: for if once thou comest to this, *that thou wilt be rich, thou fallest into temptation and a snare, and into divers foolish and hurtful lusts.* Keep these things as thy upper garments, still loose about thee, that thou mayest lay them by whenever there is cause: but let God and glory be next thy heart, yea, as the very blood and spirit, by which thou livest: still remember that of the spirit, *the friendship of the world is enmity with* God: *whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of* God. And, *love not the world, nor the things of the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* This is plain dealing; and happy he that faithfully receives it.

3. A third hindrance which I must advise thee to beware of, is, the company of ungodly and sensual men. Not that I would dissuade thee from necessary converse, from doing them any office of love: nor would I have thee conclude them to be dogs and swine, that so thou mayst evade the duty of

of reproof: nor yet to judge them ſuch at all, before thou art certain they are ſuch indeed.

But it is the unneceſſary ſociety of godly men, and familiarity with unprofitable companions, though they be not ſo apparently ungodly, that I diſſuade you from. It is not only the open profane, the ſwearer, the drunkard, that will prove hurtful to us; but the dead-hearted formaliſts, or perſons merely civil and moral, or whoſe conference is empty, unſavoury, and barren, may much divert our thoughts from heaven. As mere idleneſs and forgetting God, will keep a ſoul as certainly from heaven, as a profane, licentious, fleſhly life: ſo alſo will uſeleſs company as ſurely keep our hearts from heaven, as the company of men more diſſolute and profane. Alas, our dulneſs and backwardneſs is ſuch, that we have need of the moſt conſtant and powerful helps: a clod, or a ſtone that lies on the earth, is as prone to ariſe and fly in the air, as our hearts are to move towards heaven. You need not hold them from flying up to the ſkies; it is ſufficient that you do not help them. If our ſpirits have not great aſſiſtance, they may eaſily be kept from flying aloft, though they never ſhould meet with the leaſt impediment. O think of this in the choice of your company: when your ſpirits need no help to lift them up, but as the flames, you are always mounting upward, and carrying with you all that is in your way, then you may indeed be leſs careful of your company: but till then be careful therein. As it is reported of a Lord that was near his death, and the Doctor that prayed with him read over the Litany, *For all women labouring with child, for ſick perſons, and young children*, &c. *From lightning and tempeſt: from plague, peſtilence, and famine: from battle and murder, and from ſudden death.* Alas, ſaith he, what is this to me, who muſt preſently die? So mayeſt thou ſay of ſuch men's conference, alas, what is this to me, who muſt ſhortly be in reſt? What will it advantage thee to a life with God, to hear where the fair is

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ſuch a day, or how the market goes, or what weather it is, or is like to be, or when the moon changed, or what news is ſtirring? What will it conduce to the raiſing of thy heart Godward, to hear that this is an able miniſter, or that an able chriſtian, or that this was an excellent ſermon, or this is an excellent book; to hear a diſcourſe of baptiſms, ceremonies, the order of God's decrees, or other ſuch controverſies of great difficulty, and leſs importance? Yet this for the moſt part is the ſweeteſt diſcourſe that you are likely to have of a formal, dead-hearted profeſſor. If thou hadſt newly been warming thy heart with the joys above, would not this diſcourſe quickly freeze it again? I appeal to the judgment of any man that hath tried it, and maketh obſervations on the frame of his ſpirit.

4. A fourth hindrance to heavenly converſation, is, Diſputes about leſſer truths, and eſpecially when a man's religion lies only in his opinions; a ſure ſign of an unſatisfied ſoul. If bad examples be regarded, I need ſay the leſs upon this. It is legibly written in the faces of thouſands; it is viſible in the complexion of our diſeaſed nation. They are men leaſt acquainted with a heavenly life, who are the violent diſputers about the circumſtantials of religion: he, whoſe religion is all in his opinion, will be moſt frequently and zealouſly ſpeaking his opinions: and he whoſe religion lies in the knowledge and love of God in Chriſt, of that time when he ſhall enjoy God and Chriſt. As the body doth languiſh in conſuming fevers, when the native heat abates within, and an unnatural heat enflaming the external parts ſucceeds; ſo when the zeal of a chriſtian doth leave the internals of religion, and fly to the exterior or inferior things, the ſoul muſt needs conſume and languiſh. Yea, though you were ſure your opinions were true, yet when the chief of your zeal is turned thither, and the chief of your conference there laid out, the life of grace decays within.

Therefore

Therefore let me adviſe you that aſpire after this joyous life, ſpend not your thoughts, your time, your zeal, or your ſpeeches upon quarrels that leſs concern your ſouls: but when others are feeding on huſks or ſhells, or on this heated food which will burn their lips, far ſooner than warm and ſtrengthen their hearts; then do you feed on the joys above. I could wiſh you were all underſtanding men, able to defend every truth of God: but ſtill I would have the chief to be chiefly ſtudied, and none to ſhoulder out your thoughts of eternity. The leaſt controverted points are uſually moſt weighty, and of moſt neceſſary uſe to our ſouls.

5. As you value the comforts of a heavenly life, take heed of a proud and lofty ſpirit. There is ſuch an antipathy between this ſin and God, that thou wilt never get thy heart near him, as long as this prevaileth in it. If it caſt the angels from heaven that were in it, it muſt needs keep thy heart eſtranged from it. If it caſt firſt our parents out of paradiſe, and ſeparated between the Lord and us, it muſt needs keep our hearts from paradiſe, and increaſe the curſed ſeparation from our God. The delight of God is a humble ſoul, *even him that is contrite, and trembleth at his word;* and the delight of a humble ſoul is in God: and ſure where there is mutual delight, there will be freeſt admittance, and the heartieſt welcome, and moſt frequent converſe. Well then, Art thou a man of worth in thine own eyes? And very tender of thine eſteem with others? Art thou one that much valueſt applauſe, and feeleſt delight when thou heareſt of thy great eſteem with men; and art dejected when thou heareſt that men ſlight thee? Doſt thou love thoſe moſt who beſt honour thee; and doth thy heart bear a grudge at thoſe that thou thinkeſt undervalue thee? Wilt thou not be brought to ſhame thyſelf, by humble confeſſion, when thou haſt ſinned againſt God, or injured thy brother? Art thou one that honoureſt the rich? and thinkeſt thyſelf ſomebody if they value

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and own thee? But looke ſt ſtrangely at the poor, and art almoſt aſhamed to be their companions? Art thou unacquainted with the deceitfulneſs and wickedneſs of thy heart? Or knoweſt thou thyſelf to be vile only by reading, not by feeling thy vileneſs? Art thou readier to defend thyſelf and maintain thine innocency, than to accuſe thyſelf, or confeſs thy fault? Canſt thou hardly hear a cloſe reproof, or plain dealing, without difficulty or diſtaſte? Art thou readier in thy diſcourſe to teach than to learn; and to dictate to others, than to hearken to their inſtructions? Art thou bold and confident of thy own opinions, and little ſuſpicious of the weakneſs of thy underſtanding? But a ſlighter of the judgment of all that are againſt thee? Is thy ſpirit more diſpoſed to command than to obey? Art thou ready to cenſure the doctrine of thy teachers, the actions of thy rulers, and the perſons of thy brethren? And to think, if thou wert a judge, thou wouldſt be more juſt? or if thou wert a miniſter, thou wouldſt be more fruitful and more faithful? If theſe ſymptoms be in thy heart, beyond doubt thou art a proud perſon. Thou art abominably proud; there is too much of hell abiding in thee, for thee to have any acquaintance at heaven: thy ſoul is too like the devil, to have any familiarity with God.

I intreat you to be very jealous of your ſouls in this point: there is nothing will more eſtrange you from God: I ſpeak the more of it, becauſe it is the moſt common and dangerous ſin, and moſt promoteth to the great ſin of infidelity: you would little think what humble carriage, what exclaiming againſt pride, what ſelf-accuſing may ſtand with this deviliſh ſin of pride: O chriſtian, if thou wouldſt live continually in the preſence of thy Lord, and lie in the duſt, he would thence take thee up; deſcend firſt with him into the grave, and thence thou mayſt aſcend with him to glory. Learn of him to be meek and lowly, and then thou mayeſt taſte of this Reſt to thy ſoul. Thy ſoul elſe will be *as the troubled ſea, which cannot reſt:* and inſtead of theſe

theſe ſweet delights in God, thy pride will fill thee with perpetual diſquietneſs.

6. Another impediment to this heavenly life, is, Lazineſs, and ſlothfulneſs of ſpirit: and I verily think for knowing men, there is nothing hinders more than this. If it were only the exerciſe of the body, the moving of the line, the bending of the knee; then men would as commonly ſtep to heaven, as they go a few miles to viſit a friend; yea if it were to ſpend our days in numbering beads, and repeating certain words and prayers, or in the outward parts of duties commanded by God, yet it were comparatively eaſy. Further, if it were only in the exerciſe of parts and gifts, it were eaſier to be heavenly-minded. But it is a work more difficult than all this: to ſeparate our thoughts and affections from the world: to draw forth all our graces in their order, and exerciſe each on its proper object, to hold them on this, till the work doth thrive and profper in their hands! this is the difficult taſk, Heaven is above thee, the way is upwards: doſt thou think, who art a feeble ſinner, to travel daily this ſteep aſcent without a great deal of labour and reſolution? Canſt thou get that earthly heart to heaven, and bring that backward mind to God, whilſt thou lieſt ſtill and takeſt thy eaſe? If lying down at the foot of the hill, and looking toward the top, and wiſhing we were there would ſerve the turn, then we ſhould have daily travellers for heaven. But the *kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.* There muſt be violence uſed to get the firſt fruits, as well as to get the full poſſeſſion. Doſt thou not feel it ſo, though I ſhould not tell thee? Will thy heart get upwards except thou drive it? Doſt thou find it eaſy to dwell in the delights above? It is true, the work is ſweet, and no condition on earth ſo deſirable: but therefore it is that our hearts are ſo backward, eſpecially in the beginning, till we are acquainted with it. O how many, who can eaſily bring their hearts to ordinary duties

duties, as reading, hearing, praying, conferring, yet could never in all their lives, bring them, and keep them to a heavenly contemplation one half hour together? Conſider here, Reader, as before the Lord, whether this be not thy own caſe. Thou haſt known that heaven is all thy hopes; thou knoweſt thou muſt ſhortly be turned hence, and that nothing below can yield thee reſt, thou knoweſt alſo, that a ſtrange heart, a ſeldom and careleſs thinking of heaven, can fetch but little comfort thence; and doſt thou yet for all this let ſlip thy opportunities, when thou ſhouldſt walk above, and live with God? Doſt thou command the ſweetneſs of a heavenly life, and yet didſt never once try it thyſelf? But as the ſluggard that ſtretched himſelf on his bed, and cried, O that this were working! ſo doſt thou live at thy eaſe, and ſay, O that I could get my heart to heaven! How many read books, and hear ſermons, in expectation to hear of ſome eaſy courſe, or to meet with a ſhorter cut to comforts, than they are ever like to find? And if they can hear of none from the preachers of truth, they will ſnatch it with rejoicing from the teachers of falſehood; and preſently applaud the excellency of the doctrine, becauſe it hath fitted their lazy temper; and think there is no other doctrine will comfort the ſoul, becauſe it will not comfort it with hearing and looking on. And while they pretend enmity only to the law, they oppoſe the eaſier conditions of the goſpel, and caſt off the burden which all muſt bear that find reſt to their ſouls. The Lord of light, and Spirit of comfort, ſhew theſe men in time a ſurer way for laſting comfort! It was an eſtabliſhed law among the *Argi*, That if a man were perceived to be idle and lazy, he muſt give an account before the magiſtrate, how he came by his victuals and maintenance: and ſure, when I ſee theſe men lazy in the uſe of God's appointed means for comfort, I cannot but queſtion how they come by their comforts: I would they would examine it thoroughly themſelves: for God will require an account

account of it from them. Idleneſs, and not improving the truth in painful duty, is the common cauſe of men's ſeeking comfort from error: even as the people of *Iſrael*, when they had no comfortable anſwer from God, becauſe of their own ſin and neglect, would run to ſeek it from the idols of the heathens: ſo when men are falſe-hearted, and the Spirit of truth denies them comfort, becauſe they deny him obedience, they will ſeek it from a lying ſpirit.

My advice to ſuch a lazy ſinner, is this: as thou art convicted that this work is neceſſary to thy comfort, ſo reſolvedly ſet upon it: if thy heart draw back, and be indiſpoſed, force it on with the command of reaſon; and if thy reaſon begin to diſpute the work, force it with producing the command of God; and quicken it with the conſideration of thy neceſſity, and the other motives before propounded; and let the enforcements that brought thee to the work, be ſtill in thy mind to quicken thee in it. Do not let ſuch an incomparable treaſure lie before thee, while thou lieſt ſtill with thy hand in thy boſom: let not thy life be a continual vexation, which might be a continual feaſt, and all becauſe thou wilt not be at the pains. When thou haſt once taſted the ſweetneſs of it, and a little uſed thy heart to the work, thou wilt find the pains thou takeſt abundantly recompenſed. Only ſit not ſtill with a diſconſolate ſpirit, while comforts grow before thine eyes. Neither is it a few moral, lazy, running thoughts, that will fetch thee this conſolation from above; no more than a few lazy, formal words will prevail with God inſtead of fervent prayer. I know Chriſt is the fountain, and I know, this, as every other gift, is of God: but yet if thou aſk my advice, how to obtain theſe waters of conſolation; I muſt tell thee, there is ſomething alſo for thee to do: the goſpel hath its conditions and works, though not ſuch impoſſible ones, as the law; Chriſt hath his yoke and his burden, though eaſy, and thou muſt take it up,

or

or thou wilt never find reſt to thy ſoul. I know ſo far as you are ſpiritual, you need not all this ſtriving and violence, but that is, but in part, and in part you are carnal; and as long as it is ſo, there is no talk of eaſe. It was the *Parthians* cuſtom, that none muſt give their children any meat in the morning, before they ſaw the ſweat on their faces; and you ſhall find this to be God's moſt uſual courſe, not to give his children the taſte of his delights, till they begin to ſweat in ſeeking after them. Therefore lay them both together, and judge whether a heavenly life, or thy caſe be better; and make the choice accordingly. Yet this let me ſay, thou needeſt not expend thy thoughts more than now thou doſt: it is but only to employ them better: I preſs thee not to buſy thy mind much more than thou doſt; but to buſy it upon better and more pleaſant objects. Employ but ſo many ſerious thoughts every day, upon the excellent glory of the life to come, as thou now employeſt on thy affairs in the world: nay, as thou daily loſeſt on vanities, and thy heart will be at heaven in a ſhort ſpace.

7. It is alſo a dangerous hindrance to content ourſelves with the mere preparative to this heavenly life, while we are ſtrangers to the life itſelf; when we take up with the mere ſtudies of heavenly things, and the notions and thoughts of them in our brain, or the talking of them with one another, as if this were all that makes us heavenly people. There is none in more danger of this ſnare, than thoſe that are much in public duty, eſpecially preachers of the goſpel. O how eaſily may they be deceived here, while they do nothing more than read of heaven, and ſtudy of heaven, and preach of heaven, and pray, and talk of heaven! What, is not this the heavenly life? O that God would reveal to our hearts the danger of this ſnare. Alas, all this is but mere preparation: this is not the life we ſpeak of, though it is a help hereto. I entreat every one of my brethren in the miniſtry, that they ſearch and watch againſt

this temptation. This is but gathering the materials, and not the erecting of the building. This is but gathering manna for others, not eating and digeſting ourſelves; as he that ſits at home may ſtudy geography, and draw moſt exact deſcriptions of countries, and yet never ſee them, nor travel towards them: ſo you may deſcribe to others the joys of heaven, and yet never come near it in your own hearts: if you ſhould ſtudy of nothing but heaven while you lived, and preach of nothing but heaven to your people, yet might your own hearts be ſtrangers to it. We are under a more ſubtle temptation than other men, to draw us from this heavenly life: if our employments lay at a greater diſtance from heaven, we ſhould not be ſo apt to be thus deluded: but when we find ourſelves employed upon nothing elſe, we are eaſier drawn to take up here. Studying and preaching of heaven is liker to a heavenly life, than thinking and talking of the world is, and likeneſs it is that may deceive us. This is to die the moſt miſerable death, even to famiſh ourſelves, becauſe we have bread on our tables, and to die for thirſt while we draw water for others: thinking it enough that we have daily to do with it, though we never drink it.

CHAP. IV.

Some general Helps to Heavenly-mindedneſs.

HAVING thus ſhewed thee what hindrances will reſiſt thee in the work: I ſhall now lay down ſome poſitive helps. But firſt, I expect that thou reſolve againſt the fore-mentioned impediments, that thou read them ſeriouſly, and avoid them faithfully, or elſe thy labour will be all in vain; thou doſt but go about to reconcile light and darkneſs, *Chriſt* and *Belial*, heaven and hell in thy ſpirit. I muſt tell thee alſo, that I expect thy

thy promiſe faithfully to ſet upon the helps which I preſcribe thee, and that the reading of them will not bring heaven into thy heart, but in their conſtant practice the Spirit will do it.

As thou valueſt then theſe foretaſtes of heaven, make conſcience of performing theſe following duties.

1. Know heaven to be the only treaſure, and labour to know what a treaſure it is: be convinced that thou haſt no other happineſs, and be convinced what happineſs is there. If thou doſt not ſoundly believe it to be the chief good, thou wilt never ſet thy heart upon it; and this conviction muſt ſink down upon thy affections: for if it be only a notion, it will have little operation.

2. Labour as to know heaven to be the only happineſs, ſo alſo to be thy happineſs. Though the knowledge of excellency and ſuitableneſs may ſtir up that love which worketh by deſire, yet there muſt be the knowledge of our intereſt or propriety, to the ſetting at work our love of complacency. We may confeſs heaven to be the beſt condition; though we deſpair of enjoying it; and we may deſire and ſeek it, if we ſee the obtainment to be but probable; but we can never delightfully rejoice in it, till we are perſuaded of our title to it. What comfort is it to a man that is naked, to ſee the rich attire of others? Or to a man that hath not a bit to put in his mouth, to ſee a feaſt which he muſt not taſte of? What delight hath a man that hath not a houſe to put his head in, to ſee the ſumptuous buildings of others? Would not all this rather increaſe his anguiſh, and make him more ſenſible of his miſery? So, for a man to know the excellencies of heaven, and not to know whether we ſhall enjoy them, may well raiſe deſires to ſeek it, but it will raiſe but little joy and content.

3. Another help to the foretaſte of Reſt is this: labour to apprehend how near it is: think ſeriouſly of its ſpeedy approach. That which we

think is near at hand, we are more ſenſible of than that which we behold at a diſtance. When we hear of war or famine in another country, it troubleth us not ſo much: or if we hear it propheſied of a long time hence? So if we hear of plenty a great way off, or of a golden age that ſhall fall out, who knows when, this never rejoiceth us. But if judgments or mercies draw near, then they affect us. This makes men think of heaven ſo inſenſibly, becauſe they conceit it at a great diſtance: they look on it as twenty, or thirty, or forty years off; and this it is that dulls their ſenſe. As wicked men are fearleſs and ſenſeleſs of judgment, becauſe the ſentence is not ſpeedily executed; ſo are the good deceived of their comforts, by ſuppoſing them farther off than they are. How much better were it to receive the ſentence of death in ourſelves, and to look on eternity as near at hand? Surely, Reader, thou ſtandeſt at the door, and hundreds of diſeaſes are ready waiting to opent he door and let thee in. Are not the thirty or forty years of thy life that are paſt quickly gone? Are they not a very little time when thou lookeſt back on them? And will not all the reſt be ſhortly ſo too? Do not days and nights come very thick? Doſt thou not feel that building of fleſh to ſhake, and perceive thy houſe of clay to totter? Look on thy glaſs, ſee how it runs: look on thy watch, how faſt it getteth? What a ſhort moment is between us and our Reſt: what a ſtep it is from hence to Everlaſting happineſs! While I am thinking and writing of it, it haſteth near, and I am even entering into it before I am aware. While thou art reading this, it poſteth on, and thy life will be gone as a tale that is told. Mayſt thou not eaſily foreſee thy dying time, and look upon thyſelf as ready to depart? It is but a few days till thy friends ſhall lay thee in the grave, and others do the like for them. If you verily believed you ſhould die to-morrow, how ſeriouſly would you think of heaven to-night? The true apprehenſions of the nearneſs of eternity doth make men's thoughts of

of it quick and piercing; put life into their fears and ſorrows, if they be unfit; and into their deſires and joys, if they have aſſurance of its glory.

4. Another help to this is, to be much in ſerious diſcourſing of it, eſpecially with thoſe that can ſpeak from their hearts. It is pity (ſaith Mr. *Bolton*) that Chriſtians ſhould ever meet together, without ſome talk of their meeting in heaven: it is pity ſo much precious time is ſpent in vain diſcourſes and uſeleſs diſputes, and not a ſober word of heaven. Methinks we ſhould meet together on purpoſe to warm our ſpirits with diſcourſing of our Reſt. To hear a miniſter or private Chriſtian ſet forth that glorious ſtate, with power and life from the promiſes of the goſpel, methinks ſhould make us ſay, as the two diſciples, *Did not our hearts burn within us, while he was opening to us the ſcriptures?* While he was opening to us the windows of heaven! Get then together fellow-chriſtians, and talk of the affairs of your country and kingdom, and comfort one another with ſuch words. This may make our hearts revive within us, as did *Jacob*'s to hear the meſſage that called him to *Goſhen*, and to ſee the chariots that ſhould bring him to *Joſeph*. O that we were furniſhed with ſkill and reſolution to turn the ſtream of men's common diſcourſe to theſe more ſublime and precious things! And when men begin to talk of things unprofitable, that we could tell how to put in a word for heaven.

5. Another help is this, make it thy buſineſs in every duty, to wind up thy affections nearer heaven. A man's attainments from God are anſwerable to his own deſires and ends; that which he ſincerely ſeeks he finds; God's end in the inſtitution of his ordinances was, that they be as ſo many ſtepping ſtones to our Reſt, and as the ſtairs by which (in ſubordination to Chriſt) we may daily aſcend into it in our affections: let this be thy end in uſing them, as it was God's end in ordaining them; and doubtleſs they will not prove unſucceſsful. Men that are ſeparated by ſea

and land, can yet by letters carry on great trades, even to the value of their whole estate: and may not a christian in the wise improvement of duties, drive on this happy trade for Rest? Come not therefore with any lower ends to duties: renounce formality, customarinesse and applause. When thou kneelest down in secret or public prayer, let it be in hope to get thy heart nearer God before thou risest off thy knees: when thou openest thy Bible or other books, let it be with this hope, to meet with some passage of divine truth, and some such blessings of the Spirit with it, as may raise thine affections nearer heaven: when thou art setting thy foot out of thy door to go to the public worship, say, I hope to meet with somewhat from God that may raise my affections before I return; I hope the Spirit will give me the meeting and sweeten my heart with those celestial delights; I hope that Christ will appear to me in the way, and shine about me with light from heaven, and let me hear his instructing and reviving voice, and cause the scales to fall from mine eyes, that I may see more of that glory than I ever yet saw; I hope before I return to my house, my Lord will take my heart in hand, and bring it within the view of Rest, and set it before his Father's presence, that I may return, as the shepherds from the heavenly vision, glorifying and praising God. Remember also to pray for thy teacher, that God would put some divine message into his mouth, which may leave a heavenly relish on thy spirit.

If these were our ends, and this our course when we set to duty, we should not be so strange as we are to heaven.

6. Another help is this: make an advantage of every object thou seest, and of every passage of divine Providence, and of every thing that befals thee in thy labour and calling, to mind thy soul of its approaching rest. As all providences and creatures are means to our rest, so do they point us to that as their end. Every creature hath the name of God and of our final rest written upon it, which a

conſiderate believer may as truly diſcern, as he can read upon a hand in a croſs-way the name of the town or city it points to. This ſpiritual uſe of creatures and providences is God's great end in beſtowing them on man; and he that overlooks this end, muſt needs rob God of his chief praiſe, and deny him the greateſt part of his thanks. This relation that our preſent mercies have to our great eternal mercies, is the very quinteſſence and ſpirit of all theſe mercies; therefore do they loſe the very ſpirit of all their mercies, and take nothing but the huſks, who overlook this relation, and draw not forth the ſweetneſs of it in their contemplations. God's ſweeteſt dealings with us would not be half ſo ſweet as they are, if they did not imitate ſome further ſweetneſs. As ourſelves have a fleſhly and a ſpiritual ſubſtance, ſo have our mercies a fleſhly and a ſpiritual uſe, and are fitted to the nouriſhing of both our parts. He that receives the carnal part and no more, may have his body comforted by them, but not his ſoul. O therefore that chriſtians were ſkilled in this art! You can open your bibles, and read there of God and of glory: O learn to open the creatures, and the ſeveral paſſages of providence, to read of God and glory there. Certainly by ſuch a ſkilful improvement we might have a fuller taſte of Chriſt and heaven, in every bit we eat, and in every draught we drink, than moſt men have in the uſe of the ſacrament.

If thou proſper in the world, let it make thee more ſenſible of thy perpetual proſperity: if thou be weary of thy labours, let it make thy thoughts of Reſt more ſweet: if things go croſs with thee, let it make thee more earneſtly deſire that day, when all thy ſufferings and ſorrows ſhall ceaſe. Is thy body refreſhed with food or ſleep? Remember the unconceivable refreſhings with Chriſt. Doſt thou hear any news that makes thee glad? Remember what glad tidings it will be to hear the ſound of the trump of God, and the abſolving ſentence of Chriſt our Judge. Art thou delighting

thyſelf in the ſociety of the ſaints? Remember the everlaſting amiable ſociety thou ſhalt have with perfected ſaints in reſt. Is God communicating himſelf to thy ſpirit? Remember that time when thy joy ſhall be full. Doſt thou hear or feel the tempeſt of wars, or ſee any cloud of blood ariſing? Remember the day that thou ſhalt be houſed with Chriſt, where there is nothing but calmneſs and amiable union and where we ſhall ſolace ourſelves in perfect peace, under the wings of the Prince of Peace. That you may ſee what advantages to an heavenly life every condition and creature doth afford us, if we have but hearts to apprehend and improve them.

7. Another ſingular help is this; be much in that angelical work of praiſe. As the moſt heavenly ſpirits will have the moſt heavenly employment, ſo the more heavenly the employment, the more will it make the ſpirit heavenly. Though the heart be the fountain of all our actions, yet do thoſe actions, by a kind of reflection, work much on the heart from whence they ſpring: the like alſo may be ſaid of our ſpeeches. So that the work of praiſing God, being the moſt heavenly work, is likely to raiſe us to the moſt heavenly temper. This is the work of thoſe ſaints and angels, and this will be our own everlaſting work: if we were more taken up in this employment now, we ſhould be liker to what we ſhall be then. When *Ariſtotle* was aſked what he thought of muſic he anſwers, *Jovem neque canere, neque citharam pulſare*; that *Jupiter* did neither ſing, nor play on the harp; thinking it an unprofitable art to men, which was no more delightful to God. But chriſtians may better argue from the like ground, that ſinging of praiſe is a moſt profitable duty, becauſe it is as it were ſo delightful to God himſelf, that he hath made it his people's eternal work; for *they ſhall ſing the ſong of* Moſes, *and the ſong of the Lamb.* As deſire, and faith, and hope are of ſhorter continuance than love and joy; ſo alſo preaching,

preaching, and prayer, and ſacraments and all means for confirmation, and expreſſion of faith and hope ſhall ceaſe, when our thanks, and praiſe, and triumphant expreſſions of love and joy ſhall abide for ever. The livelieſt emblem of heaven that I know upon earth is, when the people of God, in the deep ſenſe of his excellency and bounty, from hearts abounding with love and joy, join together both in heart and voice, in the cheerful and melodious ſinging of his praiſes. Thoſe that deny the uſe of ſinging, diſcloſe their unheavenly, unexperienced hearts, as well as their ignorant underſtandings. Had they felt the heavenly delights that many of their brethren in ſuch duties have felt they would have been of another mind! And whereas they are wont to queſtion, whether ſuch delights be genuine, or any better than carnal or deluſive? Surely, the very reliſh of God and heaven that is in them, the example of the Saints in ſcripture, whoſe ſpirits have been raiſed by the ſame duty, and the command of ſcripture for the uſe of this means one would think ſhould quickly deſtroy the controverſy. And a man may as truly ſay of theſe delights, as of the teſtimony of the ſpirit, that they witneſs themſelves to be of God.

Little do we know how we wrong ourſelves, by ſhutting out of our prayers, the praiſes of God, or allowing them ſo narrow a room as we uſually do. Reader, I entreat thee remember this: let praiſes have a larger room in thy duties: keep ready at hand matter to feed thy praiſe, as well as matter for confeſſion and petition. To this end ſtudy the excellencies and goodneſs of the Lord, as frequently as thy own neceſſities and vileneſs; ſtudy the mercies which thou haſt received, and which are promiſed: both their own worth and their aggravating circumſtances, as often as thou ſtudieſt the ſins thou haſt committed. O let God's praiſe be much in your mouths. Seven times a day did *David* praiſe him: yea, his praiſe was continually

of him. As he that offereth praiſe, glorifieth God, ſo doth he moſt rejoice and glad his own ſoul. *Offer therefore the ſacrifice of praiſe continually; in the midſt of the church let us ſing his praiſe.*

I confeſs, to a man of a languiſhing body, where the heart faints, and the ſpirits are feeble, the cheerful praiſing of God is more difficult; becauſe the body is the ſoul's inſtrument, and when it lies unſtringed, or untuned, the muſic is likely to be accordingly. Yet a ſpiritual cheerfulneſs there may be within, and the heart may praiſe, if not the voice. But where the body is ſtrong, the ſpirits lively, and the heart cheerful, and the voice at command, what advantage have ſuch for this heavenly work? With what alacrity may they ſing forth praiſes! O the madneſs of healthful youth that lay out this vigour of body and mind upon vain delights, which is ſo fit for the nobleſt work of men! And O the ſinful folly of many who drench their ſpirits in continual ſadneſs, and waſte their days in complaints and groans, and ſo make themſelves unfit for this ſweet and heavenly work! That when they ſhould join with the people of God in his praiſes, and delight their ſouls in ſinging to his name, they are ſtudying their miſeries, and ſo rob God of his praiſe, and themſelves of their ſolace. But the greateſt deſtroyer of our comfort in this duty is our ſticking in the tune and melody, and ſuffering the heart to be all the while idle, which ſhould perform the chief part of the work.

8. Another thing I will adviſe you to is this: be a careful obſerver of the drawings of the Spirit, and fearful of quenching its motions, or reſiſting its workings. If ever thy ſoul get above this earth and get acquainted with this living in heaven the Spirit of God muſt be to thee as the chariot of *Elijah*; yea, the very living principle by which thou muſt move and aſcend to heaven. O then grieve not thy guide, quench not thy life: if thou doſt, no wonder if thy ſoul be at a loſs: you little think how much the life of all your graces depends upon

upon your ready and cordial obedience to the Spirit. When the Spirit urgeth thee to ſecret prayer, and thou refuſeſt obedience; when he forbids thee a known tranſgreſſion, and yet thou wilt go on; when he telleth thee which is the way, and which not, and thou wilt not regard, no wonder if heaven and thy ſoul be ſtrange: if thou wilt not follow the Spirit while it would draw thee to Chriſt, and to duty; how ſhould it lead thee to heaven, and bring thy heart into the preſence of God? O what bold acceſs ſhall that ſoul find in its approaches to the Almighty, that is accuſtomed to a conſtant obeying of the Spirit! And how backward, how dull, and ſtrange, and aſhamed will he be to theſe addreſſes, who hath long uſed to break away from the Spirit that would have guided him! I beſeech thee learn well this leſſon, and try this courſe: let not the motions of thy body only, but the thoughts of thy heart be at the Spirit's beck. Doſt thou not feel ſometimes a ſtrong impulſion to retire from the world, and draw near to God? O do not thou diſobey, but take the offer, and hoiſt up ſail while thou mayſt have this bleſſed gale. When this wind blows ſtrongeſt, thou goeſt ſafeſt, either backward or forward. The more of this Spirit we reſiſt, the deeper will it wound, and the more we obey, the ſpeedier is our pace; as he goes heavieſt that hath the wind in his face, and he eaſieſt that hath it in his back.

CHAP. V.

A deſcription of heavenly Contemplation.

THE main thing intended is yet behind, and that which I aimed at when I ſet upon this work. All that I have ſaid is but the preparation

to this. I once more intreat thee therefore, as thou art a man that maketh conſcience of a revealed duty, and that dareſt not wilfully reſiſt the Spirit, as thou valueſt the delights of a ſaint, and as thou art faithful to the peace and proſperity of thine own ſoul, that thou diligently ſtudy the directions following; and that thou ſpeedily and faithfully put them in practice: I pray thee therefore, reſolve before thou readeſt any further, and promiſe here as before the Lord, that if the following advice be wholeſome to thy ſoul, thou wilt ſeriouſly ſet thyſelf to the work; and that no lazineſs of ſpirit ſhall take thee off, nor leſſer buſineſs interrupt thy courſe, but that thou wilt approve thyſelf a doer of this word, and not an idle hearer only. Is this thy promiſe; and wilt thou ſtand to it? Reſolve, man, and then I ſhall be encouraged to give thee my advice; only try it thoroughly, and then judge; if in the faithful following of this courſe thou doſt not find an increaſe of all thy graces, and art not made more ſerviceable in thy place: if thy ſoul enjoy not more fellowſhip with God, and thy life be no fuller of pleaſure, and thou have not comfort readier by thee at a dying hour, and when thou haſt greateſt need; then throw theſe directions back in my face, and exclaim againſt me as a deceiver for ever; except God ſhould leave thee uncomfortable for a little ſeaſon, for the more glorious manifeſtation of his attributes, and thy integrity; and ſingle thee out as he did *Job*, for an example of conſtancy and patience, which would be but a preparative for thy fuller comfort. Certainly God will not forſake this his own ordinance, but will be found of thoſe that thus diligently ſeek him. God hath, as it were, appointed to meet thee in this way: do not thou fail to give him the meeting, and thou ſhalt find by experience that he will not fail.

The duty which I preſs upon thee ſo earneſtly,

I ſhall

I ſhall now deſcribe: it is the ſet and ſolemn acting of all the powers of the ſoul upon this moſt perfect object [Reſt] by meditation.

I will a little more fully explain the meaning of this deſcription, that ſo the duty may lie plain before thee. 1. The general title that I give this duty is Meditation: not as it is preciſely diſtinguiſhed from cogitation, conſideration, and contemplation; but as it is taken in the larger and uſual ſenſe for cogitation on things ſpiritual, and ſo comprehending conſideration and contemplation.

That meditation is a duty of God's ordaining, not only in his written law, but alſo in nature itſelf, I never met with the man that would deny: But that it is a duty conſtantly practiſed, I muſt, with ſorrow, deny: it is in word confeſſed to be a duty by all, but by the conſtant neglect denied by moſt: and (I know not by what fatal ſecurity it comes to paſs, that) men that are very tender conſcienced towards moſt other duties, yet as eaſily overſlip this, as if they knew it not to be a duty at all; they that are preſently troubled if they omit a ſermon, a faſt, a prayer in public or private yet were never troubled that they have omitted meditation, perhaps all their life-time to this very day: though it be that duty by which all other duties are improved, and by which the ſoul digeſteth truths, and draweth forth their ſtrength for its nouriſhment. Certainly, I think, that as a man is but half an hour taking into his ſtomach that meat which he muſt have ſeven or eight hours to digeſt; ſo a man may take into his underſtanding and memory more truth, in one hour, than he is able well to digeſt in many. Therefore God commanded Joſhua, *That the book of the law ſhould not depart out of his mouth, but that he ſhould meditate therein day and night; that he might obſerve to do according to that which is written therein.* As digeſtion is the turning of the food into chyle and blood, and ſpirits and fleſh; ſo meditation rightly managed, turneth the truths received and

remembered into warm affection, raiſed reſolution, and holy converſation. Therefore what good thoſe men are likely to get by ſermons or providences, who are unaccuſtomed to meditation, you may eaſily judge. And why ſo much preaching is loſt among us, and men can run from ſermon to ſermon, and yet have ſuch languiſhing, ſtarved ſouls, I know no truer cauſe than their neglect of meditation. If men heard one hour and meditated ſeven, if they did as conſtantly digeſt their ſermons as they hear them, they would find another kind of benefit by ſermons, than the ordinary ſort of chriſtians do.

But becauſe meditation is a general word, and it is not all meditation that I here intend, I ſhall therefore lay down the difference whereby this I am urging is diſcerned from all other ſorts of meditation. And the different is taken from the act, and from the object of it.

From the act, which I call the ſet and ſolemn acting of all the powers of the ſoul.

1. I call it the acting of them, for it is action that we are directing you in now, and not diſpoſitions; yet theſe alſo are neceſſarily preſuppoſed: it muſt be a ſoul that is qualified for the work, by the ſupernatural grace of the Spirit, which muſt be able to perform this heavenly exerciſe. It is a work of the living, and not of the dead: it is a work of all other the moſt ſpiritual, and therefore not to be well performed by a heart that is merely carnal.

2. I call this meditation the acting of the powers of the ſoul, meaning the ſoul as rational. It is the work of the ſoul; for bodily exerciſe doth here profit but little. The ſoul hath its labour and its eaſe, its buſineſs and its idleneſs, as well as the body; and diligent ſtudents are uſually as ſenſible of the labour and wearineſs of their ſpirits, as they are of that of the members of the body.

This action of the ſoul is it I perſuade thee to.

3. I call it the acting of all the powers of the ſoul, to difference it from the common meditation of ſtudents, which is uſually the mere employment of the brain. It is not a bare thinking that I mean, nor the mere uſe of invention or memory, but a buſineſs of a higher or more excellent nature.

The underſtanding is not the whole ſoul, and therefore cannot do the whole work as God hath made ſeveral parts in man, to perform their ſeveral offices for his nouriſhing and life; ſo hath he ordained the faculties of the ſoul to perform their ſeveral offices for his ſpiritual life: ſo the underſtanding muſt take in truths, and prepare them for the will, and it muſt receive them, and commend them to the affections: the beſt digeſtion is in the bottom of the ſtomach; the affections are as it were the bottom of the ſoul, and therefore the beſt digeſtion is there: while truth is but a ſpeculation ſwimming in the brain, the ſoul hath not taken faſt hold of it; Chriſt and heaven have various excellencies, and therefore God hath formed the ſoul with a power of divers ways of apprehending, that ſo we might be capable of enjoying thoſe excellencies.

What good could all the glory of heaven have done us? Or what pleaſure ſhould we have had in the goodneſs of God himſelf, if we had been without the affections of love and joy, whereby we are capable of being delighted in that goodneſs? So alſo, what ſtrength or ſweetneſs canſt thou receive by thy meditations on eternity, while thou doſt not exerciſe thoſe affections which are the ſenſes of the ſoul, by which it muſt receive this ſtrength and ſweetneſs?

This is it that hath deceived chriſtians in this buſineſs: they have thought meditation is nothing but the bare thinking on truths, and the rolling of them in the underſtanding and memory, when every ſchool-boy can do this.

Therefore

Therefore this is the great taſk in hand, and this is the work that I would ſet thee on; to get theſe truths from thy head to thy heart; that all the ſermons which thou haſt heard of heaven, and all the notions thou haſt conceived of this Reſt, may be turned into the blood and ſpirit of affection, and thou mayeſt feel them revive thee, and warm thee at the heart, and may ſo think of heaven, as heaven ſhould be thought on.

If thou ſhouldſt ſtudy nothing but heaven while thou liveſt. and ſhould have thy thoughts at command, to turn them hither on every occaſion, and yet ſhouldſt proceed no farther than this! this were not the meditation that I intended: as it is thy whole ſoul that muſt poſſeſs God hereafter, ſo muſt the whole in a lower manner, poſſeſs him here. I have ſhewn you in the beginning of this treatiſe, how the ſoul muſt enjoy the Lord in glory, to wit, by knowing, by loving, by joying in him: why, the very ſame way muſt thou begin thy enjoyment here.

So much as thy underſtandings and affections are ſincerely acted upon God, ſo much doſt thou enjoy him: and this is the happy work of this meditation. So that you ſee here is ſomewhat more to be done, than barely to remember and think of heaven: as running, and ſuch like labours, do not only ſtir a hand or foot, but ſtrain and exerciſe the whole body; ſo doth meditation the whole ſoul.

As the whole was filled with ſin before, ſo the whole muſt be filled with God now: as St. *Paul* ſaith of knowledge, and gifts, and faith to remove mountains, that if thou haſt all theſe without love, thou art but *a ſounding braſs, or as a tinkling cymbal*; ſo I may ſay of the exerciſe of theſe, if in this work of meditation, thou exerciſe knowledge, and gifts, and faith of miracles, and not love and joy, thou doſt nothing; if thy meditation tend to fill thy note book with notions and good ſayings concerning God, and not thy heart with

with longings after him, and delight in him, for ought I know thy book is as much a chriſtian as thou.

I call this meditation, ſet and ſolemn, to difference it from that which is occaſional. As there is prayer which is ſolemn, when we ſet ourſelves wholly to the duty; and prayer which is ſudden and ſhort, commonly called ejaculations, when a man in the midſt of other buſineſs, doth ſend up ſome brief requeſt to God: ſo alſo there is meditation ſolemn, when we apply ourſelves only to that work; and there is meditation which is ſhort and curſory, when in the midſt of our buſineſs we have ſome good thoughts of God in our mind. And as ſolemn prayer, is either firſt ſet, when a chriſtian obſerving it as a ſtanding duty, doth reſolvedly practiſe it in a conſtant courſe; or ſecondly occaſional, when ſome unuſual occaſion doth put us upon it as a ſeaſon extraordinary: ſo alſo meditation.

Now, though I would perſuade you to that meditation which is mixed with your common labours, and to that which ſpecial occaſions directs you to; yet theſe are not the main things which I here intend: but that you would make it a conſtant ſtanding duty as you do hearing, and praying, and reading the ſcripture, and that you would ſolemnly ſet yourſelves about it, and make it for that time your whole work, and intermix other matters no more with it, than you would do with praying or other duties. Thus you ſee what kind of meditation it is that we ſpeak of, viz. the ſet and ſolemn acting of the powers of the ſoul.

The ſecond part of the difference is drawn from its object, which is reſt, or the moſt bleſſed eſtate of man in his everlaſting enjoyment of God in heaven. Meditation hath a large field to walk in, and hath as many objects to work upon, as there are matters and lines, and words in the ſcriptures,

tures, as there are known creatures in the whole creation, and as there are particular diſcernable paſſages of providence in the government of all perſons and actions through the world; but the meditation that I now direct you in, is only of the end of all theſe, and of theſe as they refer to that end: it is not a walk from mountains to valleys, from ſea to land, from kingdom to kingdom, from planet to planet; but it is a walk from mountains and valleys to the holy mount *Sion*; from ſea and land to the land of the living; from the kingdoms of this world, to the kingdom of ſaints; from earth to heaven; from time to eternity. It is a walking upon the ſun, and moon, and ſtars; it is a walk in the garden and paradiſe of God. It may ſeem far off; but ſpirits are quick; whether in the body, or out of the body, their motion is ſwift; they are not ſo heavy or dull, as theſe earthly lumps, nor ſo ſlow of motion as theſe clods of fleſh. I would not have you caſt off your other meditations; but ſurely as heaven hath the pre-eminence in perfection, ſo ſhould it have the pre-eminence alſo in our meditation: that which will make us moſt happy when we poſſeſs it, will make us moſt joyful when we meditate upon it; eſpecially when that meditation is a degree of poſſeſſion, if it be ſuch affecting meditation as I here deſcribe.

You need not here be troubled with fear, leſt ſtudying ſo much on theſe high matters ſhould make you mad. If I ſet you to meditate as much on ſin and wrath, and to ſtudy nothing but judgment and damnation, then you might fear ſuch an iſſue. But it is heaven, and not hell, that I would perſuade you to walk in; it is joy and not ſorrow that I perſuade you to look on no deformed object, but only upon the raviſhing glory of ſaints, and the unſpeakable excellencies of the God of glory, and the beams that ſtream from the face

face of his Son. Are theſe ſad thoughts? Will it diſtract a man to think of his happineſs? Will it diſtract the miſerable to think of mercy? Or the captive or priſoner to foreſee deliverance? Neither do I perſuade your thoughts to matters of great difficulty, or to ſtudy knotty controverſies of heaven, or to ſearch out things beyond your reach. If you ſhould thus ſet your wit upon the tenters, you might be quickly diſtracted indeed: but it is your affections more than your inventions that muſt be uſed in this heavenly employment we ſpeak of. They are truths which are commonly known, which your ſouls muſt draw forth and feed upon. The reſurrection of the body, and the life everlaſting, are articles of your creed, and not nicer controverſies. Methinks it ſhould be liker to make a man mad, to think of living in a world of woe, to think of abiding among the rage of wicked men, than to think of living with *Chriſt* in bliſs. Methinks if we be not mad already, it ſhould ſooner diſtract us, to hear the tempeſt and roaring waves, to ſee the billows, and rocks, and ſands and gulphs, than to think of arriving ſafe at reſt. *But Wiſdom is juſtified of all her children.* Knowledge hath no enemy but the ignorant. This heavenly courſe was never ſpoke againſt by any, but thoſe that never either knew it, or uſed it. I more fear the neglect of men that do approve it. Truth looſeth more by looſe friends, than by ſharpeſt enemies.

CHAP. VI.

The fitteſt Time and Place for this Contemplation, and the Preparation of the Heart unto it.

THUS I have opened to you the nature of this duty; I proceed to direct you in the work; where I ſhall, *Firſt*, Show you how you muſt ſet upon it: *Secondly*, How you muſt behave

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in it: and *Thirdly*, How you ſhall ſhut it up. I adviſe thee, 1. Somewhat concerning the Time. 2. Somewhat concerning the Place. And 3. Somewhat concerning the frame of thy Spirit.

And 1. For the time, I adviſe thee that as much as may be, it be ſet and conſtant. Proportion out ſuch a part of thy time to the work.

Stick not at their ſcruple, who queſtion the ſtating of times as ſuperſtitious: if thou ſuit out thy time to the advantage of the work, and place no religion in the time itſelf; thou needeſt not to fear leaſt this be ſuperſtition. As a workman in his ſhop will have a ſet place for every one of his tools, or elſe when he ſhould uſe it, it may be to ſeek; ſo a chriſtian ſhould have a ſet time for every ordinary duty, or elſe when he ſhould practice it, it is ten to one but he will be put by it. Stated time is a hedge to duty, and defends it againſt many temptations to omiſſion. God hath ſtated none but the Lord's day himſelf; but he hath left it to be ſtated by ourſelves, according to every man's condition and occaſions, leſt otherwiſe his law ſhould have been a burthen or a ſnare. Yet hath he left us general rules, which by the uſe of reaſon, and chriſtian prudence, may help us to determine the fitteſt times.

It is as ridiculous a queſtion of them that aſk us, where ſcripture commands to pray ſo oft, or at ſuch hours? As if they aſked, where the ſcripture commands that the church ſtand in ſuch a place? Or the pulpit in ſuch a place? Or my ſeat in ſuch a place? Or where it commands a man to read the ſcriptures with a pair of ſpectacles?

Moſt that I have known to argue againſt a ſtated time, have at laſt grown careleſs of the duty itſelf, and ſhewed more diſlike againſt the work than the time. If God gave me ſo much money or wealth, and tell me not how much in ſcripture ſuch a poor man muſt have, nor how much my family, nor how much in clothes, and how much in expences; is it not lawful, yea, and neceſſary, that I make the diviſion myſelf, and allow to each the due portion?

So

So if God doth beſtow on me a day or week of time, and give me ſuch and ſuch work to do in this time, and tell me not how much I ſhall allot to each work; certainly I muſt make the diviſion myſelf, and proportion it wiſely and carefully too. Though God hath not told you at what hour you ſhall riſe in the morning, or at what hours you ſhall eat and drink; yet your own reaſon and experience will tell you, that ordinarily you ſhould obſerve a ſtated time. Neither let the fear of cuſtomarineſs and formality deter you from this. This argument hath brought the Lord's ſupper from once a week, to once a quarter, or once a year; and it hath brought family duties with too many of late, from twice a day to once a week or once a month. I adviſe thee therefore, if well thou mayeſt, to allow this duty a ſtated time, and be as conſtant in it as in hearing and praying: yet be cautious in underſtanding this. I know this will not prove every man's duty: ſome have not themſelves and their time at command, and therefore cannot ſet their hours: ſuch are, moſt ſervants, and many children of poor parents; and many are ſo poor that the neceſſity of their families will deny them this freedom. I do not think it the duty of ſuch to leave their labours for this work juſt at certain ſet times, no nor for prayer. Of two duties we muſt chuſe the greater, tho' of two ſins we muſt chuſe neither. I think ſuch perſons were beſt to be watchful, to redeem time as much as they can, and take their vacant opportunities as they fall, and eſpecially to join meditation and prayer, as much as they can, with the labours of their callings. There is no ſuch enmity between labouring, and meditating, or praying in the ſpirit, but that both may be done together; yet I ſay (as *Paul* in another caſe) *If thou canſt be free, uſe it rather.* Thoſe that have more ſpare time, I ſtill adviſe, that they keep this duty to a ſtated time. And indeed it were no ill huſbandry, nor point of folly, if we did ſo by all other duties: if we conſidered the ordinary works of the day, and ſuited

out

out a fit ſeaſon and proportion of time to every work, and fixed this in our memory and reſolution, or wrote it in a table, and kept it in our cloſets, and never broke it but upon unexpected and extraordinary cauſes: if every work of the day had thus its appointed time, we ſhould be better ſkilled both in redeeming time, and performing duty.

2. I adviſe thee alſo, concerning thy time for this duty, That as it be ſtated, ſo it be frequent. Juſt how oft it ſhould be, I cannot determine, becauſe men's conditions may vary it: but in general, that it be frequent, the ſcripture requireth, when it mentioneth, meditating continually, and day and night. Circumſtances of our condition, may much vary the circumſtance of our duties. It may be one man's duty to hear or pray oftener than another, and ſo it may be in this of meditation: but for thoſe that can conveniently omit other buſineſs, I adviſe, that it be once a day at leaſt. Though ſcripture tell us not how oft in a day we ſhould eat or drink: yet prudence and experience will direct us twice or thrice a day.

Thoſe that think they ſhould not tye themſelves to order and number of duties: but ſhould then only meditate or pray, when they find the Spirit provoking them to it, go upon uncertain and unchriſtian grounds. I am ſure the ſcripture provokes us to frequency, and our neceſſity ſeconds the voice of ſcripture: and if through my own neglect, or reſiſting the Spirit, I do not find it ſo excite me, I dare not therefore diſobey the ſcripture, nor neglect the neceſſities of my own ſoul. I ſhould ſuſpect that Spirit which would turn my ſoul from conſtancy in duty: if the ſpirit in ſcripture bid me meditate and pray, I dare not forbear it, becauſe I find not the ſpirit within me to ſecond the command: If I find not inclination to duty before, yet I may find aſſiſtance while I wait in performance. I am afraid of laying my corruptions upon the Spirit, or blaming the want of the Spirits aſſiſtance, when I ſhould blame the backwardneſs

wardneſs of my own heart; nor dare I make one corruption a plea for another; nor urge the inward rebellion of my nature, as a reaſon for the outward diſobedience of my life: and for the healing of my nature's backwardneſs, I more expect that the Spirit of Chriſt ſhould do it in a way of duty, than in a way of diſobedience and neglect of duty. Men that fall on duty according to the frame of their ſpirit only, are like our ignorant vulgar, who think their appetite ſhould be the only rule of their eating; when a wiſe man judgeth by reaſon and experience, leſt when his appetite is depraved, he ſhould either ſurfeit or famiſh. Our appetite is no ſure rule for our times of duty; but the word of God in general, and our ſpiritual reaſon, experience, neceſſity, and convenience in particular, may truly direct us.

Three reaſons eſpecially ſhould perſuade thee to frequency in this meditation on heaven.

1. Becauſe ſeldom converſing with him will breed a ſtrangeneſs betwixt thy ſoul and God: frequent ſociety breeds familiarity, and familiarity increaſeth love and delight, and maketh us bold and confident in our addreſſes. This is the main end of this duty, that thou mayeſt have acquaintance and fellowſhip with God therein; therefore if thou come but ſeldom to it, thou wilt keep thyſelf a ſtranger ſtill, and ſo miſs of the end of the work.

2. Seldomneſs will make thee unſkilful in the work, and ſtrange to the duty, as well as to God. How clumſily do men ſet their hands to a work they are ſeldom employed in? Whereas frequency will habituate thy heart to the work, and thou wilt better know the way in which thou daily walkeſt, yea, and it will be more eaſy and delightful alſo: the hill which made thee pant and blow at the firſt going up, thou mayeſt run up eaſily when thou art once accuſtomed to it.

3. And laſtly. Thou wilt loſe that heat and life by long intermiſſions, which with much ado thou

thou didſt obtain in duty. If thou eat but a meal in two or three days, thou wilt loſe thy ſtrength as faſt as thou getteſt it: if in holy meditation thou get near to Chriſt, and warm thy heart with the fire of love, if thou then turn away, and come but ſeldom, thou wilt ſoon return to thy former coldneſs.

It is true, the intermixed uſe of other duties may do much to the keeping thy heart above, eſpecially ſecret prayer; but meditation is the life of moſt other duties; and the view of heaven is the life of meditation.

4. Concerning the time of this duty, I adviſe thee that thou chuſe the moſt ſeaſonable time. All things are beautiful in their ſeaſon. Unſeaſonableneſs may loſe the fruit of thy labour; it may raiſe diſturbances and difficulties in the work; yea, it may turn a duty to ſin; when the ſeaſonableneſs of a duty doth make it eaſy, doth remove impediments, doth embolden us to the undertaking, and ripen its fruits.

The ſeaſons of this duty are either, *Firſt*, ordinary: or *Secondly*, extraordinary.

Firſt, The ordinary ſeaſon of your daily performance cannot be particularly determined, otherwiſe God would have determined it in his word. Men's conditions of employment, and freedom, and bodily temper, are ſo various, that the ſame may be a ſeaſonable hour to one, which may be unſeaſonable to another. If thou be a ſervant, or an hard labourer, that thou haſt not thy time at command, thou muſt take that ſeaſon which thy buſineſs will beſt afford: either as thou ſitteſt in the ſhop at thy work or as thou travelleſt on the way, or as thou lieſt waking in the night. Every man beſt knows his own time, even when he hath the leaſt to hinder him in the world: but for thoſe whoſe neceſſities tie them not ſo cloſe, but that they may chuſe what time of the day they will, my advice to ſuch is, that they carefully obſerve the temper of their body and mind, and mark when they find their ſpirits moſt active and

fit

fit for contemplation, and pitch upon that as the ſtated time. Some men are freeſt for duties when they are faſting, and ſome are then unfitteſt for all. Every man is the meeteſt judge for himſelf. The time I have always found fitteſt for myſelf, is, the evening, from ſun-ſetting to the twilight; and ſometimes in the night when it is warm and clear.

The Lord's day is a time exceeding ſeaſonable for this exerciſe. When ſhould we more ſeaſonably contemplate on reſt, than on that day which doth typify it to us? Neither do I think that typifying uſe is ceaſed, becauſe the antitype is not fully come. However it being a day appropriated to worſhip and ſpiritual duties, we ſhould never exclude this duty, which is ſo eminently ſpiritual. I think verily this is the chief work of a chriſtian ſabbath, and moſt agreeable to the intent of its poſitive inſtitution. What fitter time to converſe with our Lord, than on that day which he hath appropriated to ſuch employments, and therefore called the Lord's day? What fitter day to aſcend to heaven, than that on which our Lord did ariſe from earth, and fully triumph over death and hell, and take poſſeſſion of heaven before us.

Two ſorts of chriſtians I would entreat to take notice of this eſpecially.

1. Thoſe that ſpend the Lord's day only in public worſhip; either thro' the neglect of meditation, or elſe by their over-much exerciſe of the public, allowing no time to private duty: tho' there be few that offend in this kind; yet ſome there are, and a hurtful miſtake to the ſoul it is. They will grow out in gifts, if they exerciſe but their gifts in outward performances.

2. Thoſe that have time on the Lord's day for idleneſs and vain diſcourſe, and find the day longer than they know how well to ſpend; were theſe but acquainted with this duty of contemplation, they would need no other recreation; they

would think the longeſt day ſhort enough, and be ſorry that the night had ſhortened their pleaſure.

Secondly, For the extraordinary performance, theſe following are ſeaſonable times.

1. When God doth extraordinarily revive thy ſpirit. When God hath enkindled thy ſpirit with fire from above, it is that it may mount aloft more freely. It is a choice part of a chriſtian's ſkill, to obſerve the temper of his own ſpirit, and to obſerve the gales of grace, and how the Spirit of Chriſt doth move upon his. *Without Chriſt we can do nothing:* therefore let us be doing when he is doing; and be ſure not to be out of the way, nor aſleep when he comes. A little labour will ſet thy heart a-going at ſuch a time, when at another thou mayeſt take pains to little purpoſe.

2. When thou art caſt into troubles of mind, through ſufferings, or fear, or care, or temptations, then it is ſeaſonable to addreſs thyſelf to this duty. When ſhould we take our cordials, but in our times of fainting? When is it more ſeaſonable to walk to heaven, than when we know not in what corner of the earth to live with comfort? Or when ſhould our thoughts converſe above, but when they have nothing but grief to converſe with below?

3. Another fit ſeaſon for this heavenly duty, is, When the meſſengers of God ſummons us to die; when either our grey hairs, or our languiſhing bodies, or ſome ſuch fore-runners of death, tell us that our change cannot be far off: when ſhould we more frequently ſweeten our ſouls with the believing thoughts of another life, than when we find that this is almoſt ended, and when fleſh is raiſing fears and terrors? Surely no men have greater need of ſupporting joys than dying men: and thoſe joys muſt be fetched from our eternal ove.

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It now follows, that I ſpeak a word of the fitteſt place. Though God is every where to be found, yet ſome places are more convenient than others.

As this is a private and ſpiritual duty, ſo it is more convenient that thou retire to ſome private place. Our ſpirits have need of every help, and to be freed from every hindrance in the work. For occaſional meditation I give thee not this adviſe; but for ſet and ſolemn duty, I adviſe that thou withdraw thyſelf from all ſociety, that thou mayeſt awhile enjoy the ſociety of *Chriſt*.

And as I adviſe thee to a place of retiredneſs; ſo alſo that thou obſerve more particularly, what place or poſture beſt agreeth with thy ſpirit: whether within door, or without; whether ſitting ſtill or walking. I believe *Iſaac's* example in this alſo, will direct us to the place and poſture which will beſt ſuit with moſt, as it did with me, viz. *His walking forth to meditate in the field at the eventide.* And *Chriſt's* own example gives us the like direction. *Chriſt* was uſed to a ſolitary garden; and tho' he took his diſciples hither with him, yet did he ſeparate himſelf from them for more ſacred devotions.

I am next to adviſe thee ſomewhat concerning the preparations of thy heart. The ſucceſs of the work doth much depend on the frame of the heart. When man's heart had nothing in it that might grieve the Spirit, then it was the delightful habitation of his Maker. God did not quit his reſidence there till man did repel him by unworthy provocations. There grew no ſtrangeneſs till the heart grew ſinful, and too loathſome a dungeon for God to delight in. And were this ſoul reſtored to its former innocency, God would quickly return to his former habitation; yea, ſo far as it is renewed and repaired by the Spirit, the Lord will yet acknowledge it his own, and Chriſt will manifeſt himſelf unto it, and the Spirit will take it for its temple and reſidence. So far as the ſoul is qualified for converſing with

God, ſo far it doth actually enjoy him. Therefore *keep thy heart with all diligence, for from thence are the iſſues of life.*

More particularly, when thou ſetteſt on this duty, 1. Get thy heart as clear from the world as thou canſt; wholly lay by the thoughts of thy buſineſs, of thy troubles, of thy enjoyments, and of every thing that may take up any room in thy ſoul. Get thy ſoul as empty as poſſible thou canſt, that ſo it may be more capable of being filled with God. It is a work that will require all the powers of thy ſoul, if they were a thouſand times more capacious and active than they are, and therefore you have need to lay by all other thoughts and affections, while you are buſied here.

2. Be ſure thou ſet upon this work with the greateſt ſerioufneſs that poſſibly thou canſt. Cuſtomarineſs here is a killing ſin. There is no trifling in holy things: God will be ſanctified of all that draw near to him. Theſe ſpiritual duties are the moſt dangerous, if we miſcarry in them, of all. The more they advance the ſoul, being well uſed, the more they deſtroy it, being uſed unfaithfully as the beſt means corrupted, are the worſt.

To help thee therefore to be ſerious when thou ſetteſt on this work; *Firſt*, Labour to have the deepeſt apprehenſions of the preſence of God, and of the incomprehenſible greatneſs of the majeſty which thou approacheſt. Think with what reverence thou ſhouldſt approach thy Maker; think thou art addreſſing thyſelf to Him *that made the worlds with the word of his mouth; that upholds the earth as in the palm of his hand; that keeps the ſun, and moon, and heaven in their courſes; that bounds the raging ſea with the ſands, and ſaith, Hitherto go, and no farther:* thou art going to converſe with Him, before whom the earth will quake, and devils tremble: before whoſe bar thou muſt ſhortly ſtand, and all the world with thee, to receive their doom. O think, I ſhall then have lively apprehenſions of his majeſty; my drowſy ſpirits will then

then be awakened: why should I not now be rouzed with the sense of his greatness, and the dread of his name possess my soul?

Secondly, Labour to apprehend the greatness of the work which thou attempteſt, and to be deeply sensible both of its weight and height. If thou wert pleading for thy life at the bar of a judge, thou wouldſt be serious; and yet that were but a trifle to this: if thou wert engaged in such a work as *David* was against *Goliah*, whereon a kingdom's deliverance depended, in itself considered, it were nothing to this. Suppose thou were going to such a wrestling as *Jacob's*; suppose thou were going to see the sight which the three disciples saw in the mount; how seriously, how reverently wouldſt thou both approach and behold? If some angel from heaven should but appoint to meet thee, at the time and place of thy contemplation, how apprehensively wouldſt thou go to meet him? Why consider then with what a spirit thou shouldſt meet the Lord, and with what seriousness and dread thou shouldſt daily converse with him.

Consider also the blessed issue of the work. If it succeed, it will be an admission of thee into the presence of God, a beginning of thy eternal glory on earth; a means to make thee live above the rate of other men, and admit thee into the next room to the angels themselves; a means to make thee live and die both joyfully and blessedly: so that the prize being great, thy preparation should be answerable.

CHAP. VII.

What Affections must be acted, and by what Considerations and Objects, and in what order.

TO draw the heart nearer the work; the next thing to be discovered, is, what powers of the soul must here be acted, what affections

excited, what conſiderations are neceſſary thereto, and in what order we muſt proceed.

1. You muſt go to the memory, which is the magazine or treaſure of the underſtanding, thence you muſt take forth thoſe heavenly doctrines which you intend to make the ſubject of your meditation: for the preſent purpoſe, you may look over any promiſe of eternal life in the goſpel; any deſcription of the glory of the Saints, of the reſurrection of the body, and life everlaſting: ſome one ſentence concerning thoſe everlaſting joys, may afford you matter for many years meditation: yet it will be a point of wiſdom here, to have always a ſtock of matter in your memory, that ſo when we ſhould uſe it, we may bring forth out of our treaſury things new and old. If we took things in order, and obſerved ſome method in reſpect of the matter, and meditate firſt on the truth concerning eternity, and then on another, it would not be amiſs. And if any ſhould be barren of matter through weakneſs of memory, they might have notes or books of this ſubject for their furtherance.

2. When you have fetched from your memory the matter of your meditation, your next work is to preſent it to your judgment: open there the caſe as fully as thou canſt, ſet forth the ſeveral ornaments of the crown, the ſeveral dignities belonging to the kingdom, as they are partly laid open in the beginning of this book: let judgment deliberately view them over, and take as exact a ſurvey as it can; then put the queſtion, and require a determination. Is there happineſs in all, or not? Is not here enough to make me bleſſed? Can he want any thing, who fully poſſeſſeth God? Is there any thing higher for a creature to attain? Thus urge thy judgment to paſs an upright ſentence, and compel it to ſubſcribe to the perfection of thy celeſtial happineſs, and to leave this ſentence as under its hand upon record.

Thus exerciſe thy judgment in the contemplation of thy reſt; thus magnify and advance the

the Lord in thy heart, till an holy admiration hath poſſeſſed thy ſoul.

3. Cut the great work which you may either premiſe, or ſubjoin to this as you pleaſe, is to exerciſe thy belief of the truth of thy reſt: and that both in reſpect of the truth of the promiſe, and alſo the truth of thine own intereſt and title. As unbelief doth cauſe the languiſhing of all our graces; ſo faith would do much to revive and actuate them if it were but revived and actuated itſelf.

If we did ſoundly believe, that within a few days our eyes ſhall behold it; O what paſſions would it raiſe within us! Were we thoroughly perſuaded, that every word in the ſcripture concerning the inconceivable joys of the kingdom, and the inexpreſſible bleſſedneſs of the life to come, were the very work of the living God, and ſhould certainly be performed to the ſmalleſt tittle, O what aſtoniſhing apprehenſions of that life would it breed! How would it actuate every affection! How would it tranſport us with joy, upon the leaſt aſſurance of our title! If I were as verily perſuaded, that I ſhall ſhortly ſee thoſe great things of eternity, promiſed in the word, as I am, that this is a chair that I ſit in, or that this is a paper that I write on; would it not put another ſpirit within me? Would it not make me forget and deſpiſe the world? And even forget to ſleep, or to eat? And ſay, as Chriſt, *I have meat to eat that ye know not of?* O, Sirs, ye little know what a thorough belief would work.

Therefore let this be a chief part of your buſineſs in meditation. Read over the promiſes; ſtudy all confirming providences: call forth thine own experience: remember the ſcriptures already fulfiled both to the church and ſaints in the former ages, and eminently to both in this preſent age, and thoſe that have been fulfiled particularly to thee.

Set before your faith, the freeneſs and the univerſality of the promiſe: conſider God's offer,

and urge it upon all, that he hath accepted from the conditional covenant no man in the world, nor will exclude any from heaven, who will accept of his offer. Study alſo the gracious diſpoſition of Chriſt, and his readineſs to welcome all that will come; ſtudy all the evidences of his love, which appeared in his ſufferings, in his preaching the goſpel, in his condeſcenſion to ſinners, in his eaſy conditions, in his exceeding patience, and in his urgent invitations: do not all theſe diſcover his readineſs to ſave? Did he ever manifeſt himſelf unwilling? Remember alſo his faithfulneſs to perform his engagements. Study alſo the evidences of his love in thyſelf; look over the works of his grace in thy ſoul: if thou doſt not find the degree which thou deſireth, yet deny not that degree which thou findeſt. Remember what diſcoveries of thy ſtate thou haſt made formerly in the work of ſelf-examination. Remember all the former teſtimonies of the Spirit; and all the ſweet feelings of the favour of God; and all the prayers that he hath heard and granted; and all the preſervations and deliverances; and all the progreſs of his Spirit, in his workings on thy ſoul, and the diſpoſals of providence, conducing to thy good: and vouchſafing of means, the directing thee to them, the directing of miniſters to meet with thy ſtate, the reſtraint of thoſe ſins that thy nature was moſt prone to. Lay theſe together, and then think with thyſelf, whether all theſe do not teſtify the good will of the Lord concerning thy ſalvation? And whether thou mayeſt not conclude with *Sampſon's* mother, when her huſband thought they ſhould ſurely die, *If the Lord were pleaſed to kill us, he would not have received an offering at our hands, neither would he have ſhewn us all theſe things, nor would, as at this time, have told us ſuch things as theſe*, Judges xiii. 22, 23.

2. When the meditation hath thus proceeded about the truth of thy happineſs, the next part of the work is to meditate of its goodneſs; that when the judgment hath determined, and faith hath

hath apprehended, it may then paſs on to raiſe the affection.

1. The firſt affection to be acted is Love: the object of it is goodneſs: here then is the reviving part of my work: go to thy memory, thy judgment, and thy faith; and from thence produce the excellencies of thy reſt: take out a copy of the record of the Spirit in ſcripture, and another of the ſentence regiſtered in thy ſpirit, whereby the tranſcendent glory of the Saints is declared: preſent theſe to thy affection of love; open to it the cabinet that contains the pearl; ſhew it the promiſe, and that which it aſſureth: thou needeſt not look on heaven through a multiplying glaſs: open but one caſement, that love may look in: give it but a glimpſe of the back parts of God, and thou wilt find thyſelf preſently in another world: do but ſpeak out and love can hear: do but reveal theſe things and love can ſee: it is the brutiſh love of the world that is blind; divine love is exceeding quick ſighted. Let thy faith, as it were, take thy heart by the hand, and ſhew it the ſumptuous buildings of thy eternal habitation, and the glorious ornaments of thy father's houſe: ſhew it thoſe manſions which Chriſt is preparing, and diſplay before it the honours of the kingdom; let faith lead thy heart into the preſence of God, and draw as near as poſſible thou canſt, and ſay to it, *Behold, the Ancient of Days: the Lord Jehovah, whoſe name is* I AM: this is he who made the worlds with his word; this is the cauſe of all cauſes, the ſpring of action, the fountain of life, the firſt principle of the creatures motions, who upholds the earth, who rules the nations, who diſpoſeth of events, and ſubdueth his foes, who governeth depths of the great waters, and boundeth the rage of her ſwelling waves: who ruleth the winds, and moveth the orbs, and cauſeth the ſun to run its race, and the ſeveral planets to know their courſes: this is he that loved thee from everlaſting, that formed thee in the womb, and gave thee this ſoul; who brought

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thee forth, and shewed thee the light, and ranked thee with the chief of his earthly creatures! Who endueth thee with thy understanding and beautified thee with his gifts; who maintaineth thee with life, and health, and comforts; who gave thee thy preferments, and dignified thee with thy honours, and differenced thee from the most miserable and vilest of men. Here, O here is an object worthy thy love; here thou mayst be sure thou canst not love too much: this is the Lord that hath blest thee with his benefits, that hast spread thy table in the sight of thy enemies, and caused thy cup to overflow. This is he that angels and saints praise, and the host of heaven must magnify for ever.

Thus do thou expatiate in the praises of God, and open his excellencies to thine own heart, till thou feel the life begin to stir, and the fire in the breast begin to kindle. As gazing upon the dusty beauty of flesh doth kindle the fire of carnal love: so this gazing on the glory and goodness of the Lord will kindle spiritual love. What though thy heart be rock and flint! This often striking may bring forth the fire; but if yet thou feelest not thy love to work, lead thy heart further, and shew it yet more: shew it the Son of the living God, whose name is *Wonderful, Counsellor, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace:* shew it the King of Saints on the throne of his glory, *who is, and was, and is to come; who liveth and was dead, and behold he lives for ever more, who hath made thy peace by the blood of his cross, and hath prepared thee with himself, an habitation of peace:* his office is to be the great *Peace-maker*; his kingdom is a kingdom of peace; his gospel is the tidings of peace; his voice to thee now is the voice of peace. Draw near and behold him: dost thou not hear his voice? He that called *Thomas* to come near, and to see the prints of the nails, and to put his finger into the wounds. He that calls to thee, come near and view the Lord thy Saviour and be not faithless, but believing; *Peace, be unto thee, fear not, it is I:*

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he that calleth, Behold Me, behold Me, to a rebellious people that called not on his name, doth call out to thee a believer to behold him; he that calls to them that paſs by, to behold his ſorrow in the day of his humiliation, doth call now to thee to behold his glory in the day of his exaltation: look well upon him: doſt thou not know him? Why it is he that reverſed the ſentence of thy damnation; that bore the curſe that thou ſhouldſt have borne, and reſtored thee to the bleſſing that thou hadſt forfeited, and purchaſed the advancement which thou muſt inherit for ever; and yet doſt thou not know him? Why his hands were pierced, his head was pierced, his ſide was pierced, his heart was pierced with the ſting of thy ſin, that by theſe marks thou mayeſt always know him: doſt thou not remember when he found thee lying in thy blood, and took pity on thee, and dreſt thy wounds, and brought thee home, and ſaid unto thee, *live?* Haſt thou forgotten ſince he wounded himſelf to cure thy wounds, and let out his own blood to ſtop thy bleeding? Is not the paſſage to his heart yet ſtanding open? If thou know him not by the face, the voice, the hands, if thou know him not by the tears and bloody ſweat; yet look nearer, thou mayeſt know him by the heart; that broken-healed heart is his, that dead-revived heart is his, that pitying, melting heart is his: doubtleſs it can be none but his. Love and compaſſion are its certain ſignatures; this is he, even this is he, who would rather die than thou ſhouldſt, who choſe thy life before his own, who pleads his blood before his father, and makes continual interceſſion for thee. If he had not ſuffered, O what hadſt thou ſuffered? What hadſt thou been if he had not redeemed thee? Whither hadſt thou gone, if he had not recalled thee? There was but one ſtep between thee and hell, when he ſtept in and bore the ſtroke; he ſlew the bear and reſcued the prey; he delivered thy ſoul from the roaring lion; and is not here fewel enough for love to feed on?

Doth not this loadſtone ſnatch thy heart; and almoſt draw it forth from thy breaſt? Canſt thou read the hiſtory of love any further at once? Doth not thy throbbing heart here ſtop to eaſe itſelf; and doſt thou not, as *Joſeph*, ſeek for a place to weep in? Or do not the tears of thy love bedew theſe lines? Go then, for of love is large, it will yield thee freſh contents for ever, and be thine eternal work to behold and love; thou needeſt not then want work for thy preſent meditation.

Haſt thou forgotten the time when thou waſt weeping, and he wiped the tears from thine eyes? when thou waſt bleeding, and he wiped the blood from thy ſoul? When pricking cares and fears did grieve thee, and he did refreſh thee, and draw out the thorns? Haſt thou forgotten when thy folly wounded thy ſoul, and the venemous guilt ſeized upon thy heart? When he ſucked forth the mortal poiſon from thy ſoul, though he drew into his own.

I remember it is written of good *Melancton*, that when his child was removed from him, it pierced his heart to remember, how he once ſat weeping with the infant on his knee, and how lovingly it wiped the tears from the father's eyes: how then would it pierce thy heart to think how lovingly Chriſt hath wiped away thine! O how oft hath he found thee ſitting weeping, like *Hagar*, while thou gaveſt up thy ſtate, thy friends, thy ſoul for loſt; and he opened to thee a well of conſolation, and opened thy eyes alſo that thou mayeſt ſee it? How oft hath he found thee in the poſture of *Elias*, ſitting under the tree forlorn and ſolitary, and deſiring rather to die than to live; and he hath ſpread thee a table from heaven, and ſent thee away refreſhed and encouraged? How oft hath he found thee as the ſervant of *Elias*, crying out, *Alas, what ſhall we do, an hoſt doth compaſs the city?* And he hath opened thine eyes to ſee more for thee than againſt thee, both in regard of the enemies of thy ſoul and thy body. How oft hath he

he found thee in ſuch a paſſion of *Jonas*, in thy peeviſh frenzy, weary of thy life; and he hath not anſwered paſſion with paſſion, though he might have done well to be angry, but hath mildly reaſoned thee out of thy madneſs, and ſaid, *Doſt thou well to be angry*, or to repine againſt me? How oft hath he ſet thee on watching and praying, or repenting and believing, and when he hath returned, hath found thee faſt aſleep; and yet he hath not taken thee at the worſt, but inſtead of an angry aggravation of thy fault, he hath covered it over with a mantle of love, and prevented thy over much ſorrow with a gentle excuſe, *The ſpirit is willing, but the fleſh is weak?* He might have done by thee, as *Epaminondas* by his ſoldier, who finding him aſleep upon the watch run him through with his ſword, and ſaid, "Dead I found thee, and dead I leave thee:" but he rather choſe to awake thee more gently, that his tenderneſs might admoniſh thee, and keep thee watching. How oft hath he been traduced in his cauſe, or name, and thou haſt, like *Peter*, denied him, (at leaſt by thy ſilence) whilſt he hath ſtood in ſight? Yet all the revenge he hath taken, hath been a heart-melting look, and a ſilent remembering thee of thy fault by his countenance. How oft hath conſcience haled thee from him, as the Phariſees did the adulterous woman: and laid moſt heinous crimes to thy charge. And when thou haſt expected to hear the ſentence of death, he hath ſhamed away thy accuſers, and put them to ſilence, and ſaid to thee, *Neither do I condemn thee; go thy way and ſin no more.*

And art thou not yet tranſported with love? Can thy heart be cold when thou thinkeſt of this, or can it hold when thou remembereſt thoſe boundleſs compaſſions? Remembereſt thou not the time when he met thee in thy duties; when he ſmiled upon thee, and ſpake comfortably to thee? When thou didſt *ſit under his ſhadow with great delight, and when his fruit was ſweet to thy taſte?* When He *brought thee to his banqueting houſe*, and *his banner*

ner over thee was love? When *his left hand was under thy head, and with his right hand he did embrace thee?* And doſt thou not cry out, *Stay me, comfort me, for I am ſick of love?* Thus I would have thee deal with thy heart; thus hold forth the good dreſs of Chriſt to thy affections, plead thus the caſe with thy frozen ſoul, till thou ſay as *David* in another caſe, *My heart was hot within me.*

If theſe arguments will not rouſe up thy love, thou haſt more of this nature at hand: thou haſt all *Chriſt's* perſonal excellencies to ſtudy; thou haſt all his particular mercies to thyſelf; thou haſt all his ſweet and near relations to thee, and thou haſt the happineſs of thy perpetual abode with him hereafter. All theſe offer themſelves to thy meditation, with all their ſeveral branches. Only follow them cloſe to thy heart, ply the work, and let it not cool. deal with thy heart as *Chriſt* did with *Peter*, when he aſked thrice over, *Loveſt thou me?* till he was grieved and anſwers, *Lord, Thou knoweſt that I love thee.* So ſay thou to thy heart, loveſt thou the Lord; and aſk it the ſecond time, and urge it the third time, loveſt thou the Lord? Till thou grieve it, and ſhame it out of its ſtupidity, and it can truly ſay, thou knoweſt that I love Him.

2. The next affection to be excited is, Deſire. The object of it is goodneſs not yet attained. This being ſo neceſſary an attendant of love, and being excited by much the ſame conſiderations, I ſuppoſe you need the leſs direction, and therefore I ſhall touch but briefly on this; if love be hot, deſire will not be cold.

When thou haſt thus viewed the goodneſs of the Lord, and conſidered the pleaſures that are at his right-hand, then proceed on thy meditation thus. Think with thyſelf, where have I been? what have I ſeen? O the incomprehenſible aſtoniſhing glory! O the rare tranſcendent beauty! O bleſſed ſouls that now enjoy it; that ſee a thouſand times more clearly, what I have ſeen but darkly at a diſtance, and ſcarce diſcern through the interpoſing

poſing clouds! What a difference is there betwixt my ſtate and theirs! I am ſighing, and they are ſinging: I am ſinning, and they are pleaſing God: I have an ulcerated ſoul, like the loathſome bodies of *Job* or *Lazarus*, but they are perfect and without blemiſh: I am here entangled in the love of the world, when they are taken up with the love of God: I live indeed amongſt the means of grace, and I poſſeſs the fellowſhip of my fellow-believers; but I have none of their immediate views of God, none of that fellowſhip that they poſſeſs; they have none of my cares and fears; they weep not in ſecret; they languiſh not in ſorrows; all tears are wiped away from their eyes. O what a feaſt hath my faith beheld, and what a famine is yet in my ſpirit; I have ſeen a glimpſe of the court of God, but alas, I ſtand but as a beggar at the doors, when the ſouls of my companions are admitted in. O bleſſed ſouls, I may not, I dare not envy your happineſs; I rather rejoice in my brethren's proſperity, and am glad to think of the day when I ſhall be admitted into your fellowſhip. But O that I were ſo happy as to be in your place; not to diſplace you, but to reſt there with you. Why muſt I ſtay, and groan, and weep, and wait! My Lord is gone, he hath left this earth, and is entered into his glory: my brethren are gone, my friends are there, my houſe, my hope, my all is there! and muſt I ſtay behind to ſojourn here? What precious Saints have left this earth? If the Saints were all here, if Chriſt were here, then it were no grief for me to ſtay: but when my ſoul is ſo far diſtant from my God, wonder not if I now complain; an ignorant *Micah* will do ſo for his idol, and ſhall not my ſoul do ſo for God? And yet if I had no hope of enjoying, I would go and hide myſelf in the deſerts, and ſpend my days in fruitleſs wiſhes: but ſeeing it is the promiſed land, the ſtate I muſt be advanced to myſelf, and my ſoul draws near, and is almoſt at it, I will live and long; I will look and deſire: I

will breathe out, How long, Lord, how long! How long, Lord, holy and true, wilt thou ſuffer this ſoul to pant and groan! and wilt not open and let him in, who waits and longs to be with thee!

Thus reader, let thy thoughts aſpire: thus whet the deſires of thy ſoul by meditation; till thy ſoul long, (as *David's* for the waters of *Bethlehem*) and ſay, *O that one would give me to drink of the wells of ſalvation!* and till thou canſt ſay as he, *I have longed for thy ſalvation, O Lord.*

3. The next affection to be acted, is Hope. This is of ſingular uſe to the ſoul. It helpeth exceedingly to ſupport it in ſufferings: it encourageth it to adventure upon the greateſt difficulties; it firmly eſtabliſheth it in the moſt ſhaking trials, and it mightily enlivens the ſoul in duties.

Let faith then ſhew thee the truth of the promiſe, and judgment the goodneſs of the thing promiſed: and what then is wanting for the raiſing thy hope? Shew thy ſoul from the word, and from the mercies, and from the nature of God, what probability, yea, what poſſibility, yea, what certainty thou haſt of poſſeſſing the crown. Think thus, and reaſon thus with thy own heart: why ſhould I not confidently and comfortably hope, when my ſoul is in the hands of ſo compaſſionate a Saviour, and when the kingdom is at the diſpoſal of ſo bounteous a God? Did he ever manifeſt any backwardneſs to my good, or diſcover the leaſt inclination to my ruin? Hath he not ſworn to the contrary to me in his word, that he delighteth not in the death of him that dieth, but rather that he ſhould repent and live? Have not all his dealings with me witneſſed the ſame? Did he not mind me of my danger when I never feared? And why was this, if he would not have me to eſcape it? Did he not mind me of my happineſs, when I had no thoughts of it? And why was this, but that he would have me to enjoy it? I have been aſhamed of my hope in the arm of fleſh, but hope in the promiſe of God maketh not aſhamed:

aſhamed: I will ſay therefore in my greateſt ſufferings, *The Lord is my by portion, therefore will I hope in Him. The Lord is good to them that wait for him, to the ſoul that ſeeketh him: it is good that I both hope, and quietly wait for the ſalvation of the Lord. The Lord will not caſt off for ever! but though he cauſe grief, yet will he have compaſſion according to the multitude of his mercies.* Though I languiſh and die, yet will I hope; for he hath ſaid, *the righteous hath hope in his death.* Though I muſt lie down in duſt and darkneſs, yet there *my fleſh ſhall reſt in hope.* And when my fleſh hath nothing in which it may rejoice, yet will I keep the *rejoicing of hope firm to the end.*

4. The laſt affection to be acted is Joy. This is the end of all the reſt; love, deſire, hope, tend to the raiſing our joy. And is it nothing to have a deed or gift from God? Are his infallible promiſes no ground of joy? Is it nothing to live in daily expectations of entering into the kingdom? Is not my aſſurance of being glorified one day, a ſufficient ground for inexpreſſible joy? Is it not a delight to the heir of a kingdom, to think of what he muſt hereafter poſſeſs, though at preſent he little differ from a ſervant? Am I not commanded *to rejoice in hope of the glory of* God.

Here take thy heart once again as it were by the hand; bring it to the top of the higheſt mount; ſhew it the *kingdom of* Chriſt, *and the glory of it:* ſay to it, *All this will thy* Lord *beſtow upon thee, who haſt believed in him, and been a worſhipper of him. It is the Father's good pleaſure to give thee this kingdom.* Seeſt thou this aſtoniſhing glory above thee? Why all this is thy own inheritance. This crown is thine, theſe pleaſures are thine, becauſe thou art Chriſt's, and Chriſt is thine, when thou wert married to him, thou hadſt all this with him.

Thus take thy heart into the land of promiſe; ſhew it the pleaſant hills and fruitful vallies; ſhew it the cluſters of grapes which thou haſt gathered, and by thoſe convince it that it is a

bleſſed

bleſſed land, flowing with better than milk and honey: enter the gates of the holy city, walk through the ſtreets of the *New Jeruſalem*, walk about *Sion*, go round about her, tell the towers thereof, mark well her bulwarks, conſider her palaces, that thou mayeſt tell it to thy ſoul: *the foundation is garniſhed with precious ſtones; the twelve gates are twelve pearls; the ſtreet of the city is pure gold, as it were tranſparent glaſs; there is no temple in it, for the* Lord God *Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. It hath no need of ſun or moon, to ſhine in it, for the glory of* God *doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof, and the nations of them which are ſaved ſhall walk in the light of it.* This is thy reſt, O my ſoul, and this muſt be the place of thy everlaſting habitation: *let all the ſons of* Sion *then rejoice, and the daughters of* Jeruſalem *be glad; for great is the* Lord, *and greatly to be praiſed in the city of our* God: *beautiful for ſituation, the joy of the whole earth is mount* Sion: God *is known in her palaces for a refuge.*

Yet proceed: the ſoul (ſaith *Auſtin*) that loves, aſcends frequently, and runs familiarly through the ſtreets of the *heavenly Jeruſalem*, viſiting the patriarchs and prophets, ſaluting the apoſtles, and admiring the armies of martyrs and confeſſors. So do thou lead on thy heart as from ſtreet to ſtreet, bringing it into the palace of the great king, lead it, as it were from chamber to chamber: ſay to it, here muſt I lodge, here muſt I live, here muſt I love and be loved. I muſt ſhortly be one of this heavenly choir, I ſhall then be better ſkilled in the muſic: among this bleſſed company muſt I take my place; my tears will then be wiped away. There it is that troubles and lamentations ceaſe, and the voice of ſorrow is not heard. O when I look upon this glorious place, what a dungeon, methinks is earth? O what a difference betwixt a man feeble, pained, groaning, dying, rotting in the grave, and one of theſe triumphant, bleſſed, ſhining ſaints? Here *ſhall*

I then drink of the river of pleaſure, the ſtreams whereof make glad the city of God. *For the* Lord *will create a new earth, and the former ſhall not be remembered; we ſhall be glad and rejoice for ever in that which he creates! for he will create* Jeruſalem *a rejoicing, and her people a joy: and he will rejoice in* Jeruſalem, *and joy in his people, and the voice of weeping ſhall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying; there ſhall be no more an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days.*

Why do I not then ariſe from the duſt, and lay aſide my ſad complaints, and ceaſe my mourning? Why do I not trample down vain delights, and feed upon the foreſeen delights of glory? Why is not my life a continual joy; and the favour of heaven perpetually upon my ſpirit?

I do not place any flat neceſſity in thy acting all the fore-mentioned affections in this order at one time, or in one duty: perhaps thou mayſt ſometime feel ſome one of thy affections more flat than the reſt, and ſo to have more need of exciting: or thou mayſt find one ſtirring more than the reſt, and ſo think it more ſeaſonable to help it forward: or if thy time be ſhort, thou mayſt work upon one affection one day, and upon another the next, as thou findeſt cauſe: all this I leave to thy own prudence.

CHAP. VIII.

Some Advantages and Helps, for raiſing the ſoul by Meditation.

THE next part of this directory, is to ſhew you what advantages you ſhould take, and what helps you ſhould uſe, to make your meditations of heaven more quickning, and to make you taſte the ſweetneſs that is therein. For this is the main work, that you may not ſtick in a bare thinking,

thinking, but may have the lively sense of all upon your heart: and this you will find to be the most difficult part of the work. It is easier to think of heaven a whole day, than to be lively and affectionate on those thoughts one quarter of an hour. Therefore let us yet a little further consider what may be done, to make your thoughts of heaven piercing, affecting thoughts.

It will be a point of spiritual prudence, and a singular help of the furthering of faith to call in our senses to its assistance: if we can make us friends of those usual enemies, and make them instruments of raising us to God, which are the usual means of drawing us from God, we shall perform a very excellent work. Sure it is both possible and lawful to do something in this kind; for God would not have given us either senses themselves, or their usual objects, if they might not have been serviceable to his own praise, and helps to raise us to the apprehensions of higher things: and it is very considerable, how the Holy Ghost doth condescend in the phrase of scripture, in bringing things down to the reach of sense; how he sets forth the excellencies of spiritual things in words that are borrowed from the objects of sense. Doubtless, if such expressions had not been best, and to us necessary, the Holy Ghost would not so frequently have used them: he that will speak to man's understanding, must speak in man's language, and speak that which he is capable to conceive.

1. Go to then; when thou settest thyself to meditate on the joys above, think on them boldly as scripture hath expressed them; bring down thy conceivings to the reach of sense. Excellency without familiarity, doth more amaze than delight us; but love and joy are promoted by familiar acquaintance: when we go about to think of God and glory without these spectacles, we are lost, and have nothing to fix our thoughts upon: we set God and heaven so far from us, that our thoughts are strange, and we look at them as things

things beyond our reach, and are ready to ſay, that which is above is nothing to us: to conceive no more of God and glory but, that we cannot conceive them: and to apprehend no more, but that they are paſt apprehenſion, will produce no more love but this, to acknowledge that they are ſo far above us that we cannot love them; and no more joy but this, that they are above our rejoicing. And therefore put Chriſt no farther from you, than he hath put himſelf, leſt the divine nature be again inacceſſible. Think of Chriſt as in our own nature glorified; think of our fellow-ſaints as men there perfected; think of the city and ſtate as the Spirit hath expreſſed it, only with caution. Suppoſe thou wert now beholding this city of God, and that thou hadſt been companion with *John* in his ſurvey of its glory, and hadſt ſeen the thrones, the majeſty, the heavenly hoſts, the ſhining ſplendor which he ſaw: draw as ſtrong ſuppoſitions as may be from thy ſenſe, for the helping of thy affections. It is lawful to ſuppoſe we did ſee for the preſent, that which God hath in prophecies revealed, and which we muſt really ſee in more unſpeakable brightneſs before long. Suppoſe therefore with thyſelf thou hadſt been that apoſtle's fellow-traveller into the celeſtial kingdom, and that thou hadſt ſeen all the ſaints in their white robes, with palms in their hands; ſuppoſe thou hadſt heard thoſe ſongs of *Moſes* and of the Lamb: or didſt even now hear them praiſing and glorifying the Living God: if thou hadſt ſeen theſe things indeed, in what a rapture wouldſt thou have been? And the more ſeriouſly thou putteſt the ſuppoſition to thyſelf, the more will the meditation elevate thy heart.

I would not have thee as the *Papiſts*, draw them in pictures, nor uſe ſuch ways to repreſent them. This, as it is a courſe forbidden by God, ſo it would but ſeduce and draw down thy heart; but get the livelieſt picture of them in thy mind that poſſibly thou canſt; meditate of them, as if thou wert all the while beholding them, and as if thou wert even hearing the Hallelujahs; till thou canſt ſay,

ſay, Methinks I ſee a glimpſe of the glory! Methinks I hear the ſhouts of joy and praiſe; Methinks I even ſtand by *Abraham* and *David*, *Peter* and *Paul*, and more of theſe triumphing ſouls! Methinks I ſee the Son of God appearing in the clouds, and the world ſtanding at the bar to receive their doom? Methinks I hear him ſay, *Come ye bleſſed of my Father!* and ſee them go rejoicing *into the joy of their Lord!* My very dreams of theſe things have deeply affected me; and ſhould not theſe juſt ſuppoſitions affect me much more! What if I had ſeen with *Paul* thoſe unutterable things! Should not I have been exalted (and that perhaps above meaſure) as well as he? What if I had ſtood in the room of *Stephen*, and ſeen heaven opened, and *Chriſt* ſitting at the right hand of God? Surely that one ſight was worth the ſuffering his ſtorm of ſtones. O that I might but ſee what he did ſee, though I alſo ſuffered what he did ſuffer? What if I had ſeen ſuch a ſight as *Michaiah* ſaw? *The Lord ſitting upon his throne, and all the hoſt of heaven ſtanding on his right hand and on his left.* Why theſe men of God did ſee ſuch things: and I ſhall ſhortly ſee far more than ever they ſaw, till they were looſed from the fleſh, as I muſt be. And thus you ſee how the familiar conceiving of the ſtate of bleſſedneſs, as the Spirit hath in a condeſcending language expreſſed it, and our ſtrong raiſing of ſuppoſitions from our bodily ſenſes, will further our affections in this heavenly work.

2. There is yet another way by which we may make our ſenſes ſerviceable to us, and that is, by comparing the objects of ſenſe with the objects of faith; and ſo forcing ſenſe to afford us that medium, from whence we may conclude the tranſcendent worth of glory, by arguiug from ſenſitive delights as from the leſs to the greater. And here for your further aſſiſtance, I ſhall furniſh you with ſome of theſe comparative arguments.

And 1. You muſt ſtrongly argue with your hearts, from the corrupt delights of ſenſual men. Think

Think then with yourſelves, when you would be ſenſible of the joys above: is it ſuch a delight to be a ſinner to do wickedly? And will it not be delightful indeed to live with God? Hath a drunkard ſuch delight in his cups and companions, that the very fears of damnation will not make him forſake them? Sure then there are high delights with God! If the way to hell can afford ſuch pleaſure, what are the pleaſures of the Saints in heaven.

2. Compare alſo the delights above with the lawful delights of ſenſe. Think with thyſelf, how ſweet is food to my taſte when I am hungry? Eſpecially as *Iſaac* ſaid, *that which my ſoul loveth?* What delight hath the taſte in ſome pleaſant fruits, in ſome well reliſhed meats? O what delight then muſt my ſoul have in feeding upon Chriſt the living bread! And in eating with him at his table in his kingdom? How pleaſant is drink in the extremity of thirſt? Then how delightful will it be to my ſoul *to drink of the fountain of living water, which whoſo drinks ſhall thirſt no more.*

3. Conſider alſo the delights above with the delights that are found in natural knowledge: this is far beyond the delights of ſenſe, and the delights of heaven are further beyond it. Think then, can an *Archimedes* be ſo taken up with his mathematical invention, that the threats of death cannot take him off? Should I not much more be taken up with the delights of glory, and die with theſe contemplations freſh upon my ſoul? Eſpecially when my death will perfect my delights! But thoſe of *Archimedes* die with him. What a pleaſure is it to dive into the ſecrets of nature! to find out the myſteries of arts and ſciences! If we make but any new diſcovery in one of theſe, what ſingular pleaſure do we find therein! Think then what high delights there are in the knowledge of God and Chriſt. If the face of human learning be ſo beautiful, that ſenſual pleaſures are to it but baſe and brutiſh; how beautiful then is the face of God! When we light on ſome choice and learned

learned book, how are we taken with it! We could read and ſtudy it day and night; we can leave meat, and drink, and ſleep to read it: what delights then are there at God's right hand, where we ſhall know in a moment more than any mortal can know!

4. Compare alſo the delights above, with the delights of morality, and of the natural affections. What delight had many ſober heathens in the practice of moral duties: ſo that they took him only for an honeſt man who did well through the love of virtue, and not only for fear of puniſhment; yea ſo highly did they value virtue, that they thought the chief happineſs of man conſiſted in it. Think then what excellency there will be in that rare perfection which we ſhall be raiſed to in heaven? And in that uncreated perfection of God which we ſhall behold? What ſweetneſs is there in the exerciſe of natural love; whether to children, to parents, to yoke-fellows, or to friends. The delight which, ſpecial faithful friends find in loving and enjoying one another, is a moſt pleaſing ſweet delight: even *Chriſt* himſelf, as it ſeemeth had ſome of this kind of love; for he had one diſciple whom he eſpecially loved. Think then, if the delights of cordial friendſhip be ſo great what delight ſhall we have in the friendſhip of the Moſt High? and in our mutual amity with Jeſus Chriſt? and in the deareſt love and comfort with the ſaints? Surely this will be a cloſer and ſtricter friendſhip than ever was betwixt my friends on earth; and theſe will be more lovely and deſirable friends than any that ever the ſun beheld; and both our affections to our Father and our Saviour, but eſpecially his affection to us, will be ſuch as here we never knew, as ſpirits are ſo far more powerful than fleſh that one angel can deſtroy an hoſt, ſo alſo are their affections more powerful; we ſhall then love a thouſand times more ſtrongly and ſweetly than now we can; and all the attributes and works of God are incomprehenſible, ſo is the attributes and works of love; he

he will love as many thouſand times more, than we even at the perfecteſt, are able to love him: what joy then will there be in this mutual love.

5. Compare alſo the excellencies of heaven with thoſe glorious works of the creation which our eyes now behold. What a deal of wiſdom, and power, and goodneſs, appeareth in and through them to a wiſe obſerver? What a deal of the majeſty of the great Creator doth ſhine in the face of this fabrick of the world? Surely his works are great and admirable, ſought out of them that have pleaſure therein. This makes the ſtudy of natural philoſophy ſo pleaſant, becauſe the works of God are ſo excellent: what rare workmanſhip is in the body of man? yea in the body of every beaſt? which makes the anatomical ſtudies ſo delightful: what excellence in every plant we ſee? in the beauty of flowers? in the nature, diverſity, and uſe of herbs? in fruits, in roots, in minerals, and what not? But eſpecially if we look to the greater works; if we conſider the whole body of this earth, and its creatures, and inhabitants; the ocean of water, with its motions and dimenſions; the variation of the ſeaſons and of the face of the earth; the intercourſe of ſpring and fall, of ſummer and winter; what wonderful excellencies do theſe contain? Why, then think of theſe things which are but ſervants to ſinful men, are yet ſo full of myſterious worth; what is that place where God himſelf doth dwell, prepared for the juſt who are perfected with Chriſt?

When thou walkeſt forth in the evening, look upon the ſtars, in what number they beſpangle the firmament: if in the day time, look up to the glorious ſun: view the wide expanding heavens, and ſay to thyſelf, what glory is in the leaſt of yonder ſtars? What a vaſt, what a reſplendant body hath yonder moon, and every planet? What an inconceivable glory hath the ſun? Why all this is nothing to the glory of heaven. Yonder ſun muſt there be laid aſide as uſeleſs; for it

would not be ſeen for the brightneſs of God! I ſhall live above all yonder glory: yonder is but darkneſs to the luſtre of my Father's houſe; I ſhall be as glorious as that ſun myſelf.

So think of the reſt of the creatures! This whole earth is but my Father's footſtool: this thunder is nothing to his dreadful voice; theſe winds are nothing to the breath of his mouth: ſo much wiſdom and power as appear in theſe; ſo much and far more greatneſs and goodneſs, and delight, ſhall I enjoy in the actual fruition of God. Surely, if the rain which rains, and the ſun which ſhines on the juſt and unjuſt, be ſo wonderful; the ſun then which muſt ſhine on none but ſaints and angels, muſt needs be wonderful and raviſhing in glory.

6. Compare the things which thou ſhalt enjoy above, with the excellencies of thoſe admirable works of providence, which God exerciſeth in the church, and in the world. What glorious things hath the Lord wrought? And yet we ſhall ſee more glorious than theſe. Would it not be an aſtoniſhing ſight, to ſee the ſea ſtand as a wall on the right hand, and on the left, and the people of *Iſrael* paſs ſafely through, and *Pharaoh* and his people ſwallowed up? If we had ſeen the rock to guſh forth ſtreams, or manna or quails rained down from heaven, or the earth open, and ſwallow up the wicked: would not all theſe have been wonderous, glorious ſights? But we ſhall ſee far greater things than theſe. And as ſights ſhall be more wonderful, ſo alſo ſhall they be more ſweet: there ſhall be no more blood or wrath intermingled; we ſhall not then cry out as *David*, *Who ſhall ſtand before this holy* Lord God? Would it not have been an aſtoniſhing ſight to have ſeen the ſun ſtand ſtill in the firmament? Why we ſhall ſee when there ſhall be no ſun to ſhine at all; we ſhall behold for ever a ſun of more incomparable brightneſs. Were it not a brave life, if we might ſtill live among wonders and miracles; and all for us, and not againſt us? If we could

could have drought or rain at our prayers, as *Elias*; or if we could call down fire from heaven, to deſtroy our enemies: or raiſe the dead to life, as *Eliſha*; or cure the diſeaſed, and ſpeak ſtrange languages, as the apoſtles: alas, theſe are nothing to the wonders which we ſhall ſee and poſſeſs with God, even all thoſe wonders of goodneſs and love! We ſhall poſſeſs that pearl and power itſelf, through whoſe virtue all theſe works were done; we ſhall ourſelves be the ſubjects of more wonderful mercies than any of theſe. *Jonas* was but raiſed from a three days burial, from the belly of the whale in the deep ocean; but we ſhall be raiſed from many years rottenneſs and duſt, and that duſt exalted to a ſun-like glory, and that glory perpetuated to all eternity. What ſayeſt thou? Is not this the greateſt of miracles or wonders? Surely if we obſerve but common providences, the motions of the ſun, the tides of the ſea, the ſtanding of the earth, the warming it, the watering it with rain as a garden, the keeping in order a wicked confuſed world, with multitudes the like; they are all very admirable: but then to think of the *Sion* of God, of the viſion of the divine majeſty, of the comely order of the heavenly hoſt: what an admirable ſight muſt that needs be? O what rare and mighty works have we ſeen? what clear diſcoveries of an almighty arm? what magnifying of weakneſs? What caſting down of ſtrength? What wonders wrought by moſt improbable means? What turning of tears and fears into ſafety and joy. Such hearing of earneſt prayers, as if God could have denied us nothing? All theſe were wonderful works; but what are theſe to our full deliverance? to our final conqueſt? to our eternal triumph? and to that great day of great things?

7. Compare alſo the mercies which thou ſhalt have above, with thoſe particular providences which thou haſt enjoyed thyſelf. If thou be a chriſtian indeed, thou haſt, if not in thy book, yet certainly in thy heart, many favours upon

record; the very remembrance and rehearſal of them is ſweet; how much more ſweet was the actual enjoyment? But all theſe are nothing, to the mercies which are above. Look over the excellent mercies of thy youth, the mercies of thy riper years, the mercies of thy ſeveral places and relations: are they not excellent and innumerable? Canſt thou not think of the ſeveral places thou haſt lived in, and remember that they have each had their ſeveral mercies? The mercies of ſuch a place, and ſuch a place; and all of them very rich and engaging mercies? O how ſweet was it to thee, when God reſolved thy laſt doubts? when he overcame and ſilenced thy fears and unbelief? when he prevented the conveniences of thy life, which thy own counſel would have caſt thee into? When he eaſed the pains? when he healed thy ſickneſs, and raiſed thee up from the very grave? Were not all theſe precious mercies? Alas, theſe are but ſmall things for thee in the eyes of God: he intendeth thee far better things than theſe, even ſuch as theſe are ſcarce a taſte of. It was a choice mercy that God hath ſo notably anſwered thy prayers, and that thou haſt been ſo oft and evidently a prevailer with him: but O think, are all theſe ſo ſweet and precious, that my life would have been a perpetual miſery without them? Hath his providence lifted me ſo high on earth, and his merciful kindneſs made me great? How ſweet then will the glory of his preſence be? And how high will his eternal love exalt me? And how great ſhall I be made in communion with his greatneſs? If my pilgrimage and warfare have ſuch mercies: what ſhall I find in my home, and in my triumph? If I have found ſo much in this ſtrange country, at ſuch a diſtance from him; what ſhall I have in heaven, in his immediate preſence?

8. Compare the joy which thou ſhalt have in heaven with that which the Saints of God hath found in the way to it, and in the foretaſtes of it: when

when thou ſeeſt a heavenly man rejoice, think what it is that ſo affects him. It is the property of fools to rejoice in toys; but the people of God are wiſer, they know what it is that makes them glad. When did God reveal himſelf to any of his Saints, but the joy of their hearts was anſwerable to the revelation? When *Moſes* had been talking with God in the mount, it made his viſage ſo ſhining and glorious, that the people could not endure to behold it, but he was fain to put a veil upon it: no wonder then if the face of God muſt be veiled, till we are come to that ſtate where we ſhall be capable of beholding him, when *the veil ſhall be taken away, and we all beholding him with open face, ſhall be changed into the ſame image from glory to glory.* Alas, what are the back parts which *Moſes* ſaw from the clefts of the rock, to that open face which we ſhall behold hereafter? What is that revelation to *John* in *Patmos*, to this revelation which we ſhall have in heaven? How ſhort doth *Paul's* viſion come of the ſaint's viſion above with God? How ſmall a part of the glory which we muſt ſee, was that which ſo tranſported *Peter* in the mount? I confeſs theſe were all extraordinary foretaſtes; but little to the full beatifical viſion. When *David* foreſaw the reſurrection of Chriſt and of himſelf, how did it make him break forth and ſay, *Therefore my heart was glad, and glory rejoiceth, my fleſh alſo ſhall reſt in hope.* Think then, if the foreſight can raiſe ſuch raviſhing joy, what will the actual poſſeſſion do? How oft have we read and heard of dying ſaints, who when they had ſcarce ſtrength and life to expreſs them, have been as full of joy as their hearts could hold? And when their bodies have been under the extremities of their ſickneſs, yea, ready to feel the pangs of death, have yet had ſo much of heaven in their ſpirits, that their joy hath far ſurpaſſed their ſorrows? And if a ſpark of this fire be ſo glorious, and that in the midſt of the ſea of adverſity; what then is that ſun of glory itſelf?

9. Compare alſo the glory of the heavenly kingdom, with the glory of the church on earth, and of Chriſt in his ſtate of humiliation; and you may eaſily conclude, if Chriſt ſtanding in the room of ſinners, was ſo wonderful in excellencies, what is Chriſt at the Father's right-hand? And if the church under her ſins and enemies, hath ſo much beauty; ſomething it will have at the marriage of the Lamb. How wonderful was the Son of God in the form of a ſervant! When he is born, the heavens muſt proclaim him by miracles: a new ſtar muſt appear in the firmament, and fetch men from remote parts of the world to worſhip him in a manger; the angels and heavenly hoſt muſt declare his nativity, and ſolemnize it with praiſing and glorifying God: when he ſits upon his office, his whole life is a wonder; water turned into wine, thouſands fed with five loaves and two fiſhes, the lepers cleanſed, the ſick healed, the lame reſtored, the blind receive their ſight, the dead raiſed: if we had ſeen all this, ſhould we not have thought it wonderful? The moſt deſperate diſeaſes cured with a touch, with a word; the blind eyes with a little clay and ſpittle; the devils departing by legions at his command; the winds and the ſeas obeying his word: are not all theſe wonderful? Think then, how wonderful is his celeſtial glory? If there be ſuch cutting down of boughs, and ſpreading of garments, and crying Hoſannah, to one that comes into *Jeruſalem* riding on an aſs; what will there be when he comes with his angels in his glory? If they that hear him preach the goſpel of the kingdom, have their hearts turned within them, that they turn and ſay, *never man ſpake like this man*; then ſure they that behold his majeſty in his kingdom, will ſay *there was never glory like this glory*. If when his enemies come to apprehend him, the word of his mouth doth caſt them all to the ground: if when he is dying, the earth muſt tremble, the veil of the temple rend, the ſun in the firmament hide

its face, and the dead bodies of the Saints ariſe. O what a day will it be, when he will once more ſhake, not the earth only, but the heavens alſo, and remove the things that are ſhaken? when this ſun ſhall be taken out of the firmament, and be everlaſtingly darkened with the brightneſs of his glory: when the dead muſt all riſe and ſtand before him; and *hell ſhall acknowledge him to be the Son of* God, *and every tongue confeſs him to be* Lord *and King?* If when he riſeth again, the grave and death have loſt their power, and the angels of heaven muſt roll away the ſtone, and aſtoniſh the watchmen till they are as dead men, and ſend the tidings to his dejected diſciples; if the bolted doors cannot keep him out; if the ſea be as firm ground for him to walk on; if he can aſcend to heaven in the ſight of his diſciples, and ſend the angels to forbid them gazing after him; O what power, and dominion, and glory then is he now poſſeſſed of! and muſt we ever poſſeſs with him!

Yet think farther, Are his very ſervants enabled to do ſuch miracles when he is gone from them? Can a few poor fiſhermen and tent-makers cure the lame, and blind, and ſick? open priſons, deſtroy the diſobedient, and raiſe the dead? O then what a world will that be where every one can do greater works than theſe? It were much to have the devils ſubject to us; but more to have our names written in the book of life. If the very preaching of the goſpel be accompanied with ſuch power, that it will pierce the heart and diſcover its ſecrets, bring down the proud, and make the ſtony ſinner tremble; if it can make men burn their books, ſell their lands, bring in the price, and lay it down at the preachers feet; if it can make the ſpirit of princes ſtoop, and the kings of the earth reſign their crowns, and do their homage to Jeſus Chriſt; if it can ſubdue kingdoms, and convert thouſands, and turn the world thus upſide down; if the very mention of the judgment and life to come, can make the

judge on the bench tremble: what then is the glory of the kingdom itself? What an absolute dominion have Christ and his saints? And if they have this power and honour in the day of their abasement, what will they have in their full advancement?

10. Compare the mercies thou shalt have above, with the mercies which Christ hath here bestowed on thy soul; and the glorious change which thou shalt have at last, with the gracious change which the Spirit has wrought on thy heart. Compare the comforts of thy glorification, with the comforts of thy sanctification. There is not the smallest grace in thee, which is genuine, but is of greater worth than the riches of the *Indies!* nor a hearty desire and groan after Christ, but is more to be valued than the kingdoms of the world: a renewed nature is the very image of God; scripture calleth it, *Christ dwelling in us*, and *the Spirit of* God *dwelling in us:* it is a beam from the face of God himself; it is the seed of God remaining in us; it is the only inherent beauty of the rational soul; it ennobleth man above all nobility: it fitteth him to understand his maker's pleasure, to do his will, and to receive his glory: think then with thyself, if *this grain of mustard seed* be so precious, what is *the Tree of Life in the midst of the paradise of* God? If a spark of life be so much, how glorious then is the fountain and end of this life? If we are even now said *to be like* God *and to bear his image, and to be holy as he is holy;* sure we shall then be much liker God, when we are perfectly holy, and without blemish. Is the desire of heaven so precious a thing? what then is the thing itself? Is love so excellent? what then is the beloved? Is our joy in foreseeing and believing so sweet? what will be the joy in the full possession? O the delight that a christian hath in the lively exercise of some of these affections! What good doth it to his very heart, when he can feelingly say, he loves his Lord? Yea, even those troubling passions of sorrow

ſorrow and fear, are yet delightful, when they are lightly exerciſed: how glad is a poor chriſtian when he feeleth his heart melt, and when the thoughts of ſinful unkindneſs will diſſolve it! Even his ſorrow doth yield him matter of joy: O what will it then be when we ſhall do nothing but know God, and love, and rejoice, and praiſe, and all this in the higheſt perfection? What a comfort is it to my doubting ſoul, when I have a little aſſurance of the ſincerity of my graces? How much more will it comfort me, to find that the Spirit hath ſafely conducted me, and left me in the arms of Jeſus? What a change was it that the Spirit made upon my ſoul, when he firſt *turned me from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God?* To be taken from that horrid ſtate of nature, wherein myſelf and my actions were loathſome to God, and the ſentence of death was paſſed upon me, and the Almighty took me for his utter enemy; and to be preſently numbered among his Saints, and called his friend, his ſervant, his ſon, and the ſentence revoked which was gone forth; O what a change was this! To be taken from that ſtate wherein I was born, and had lived ſo many years, and if I had ſo died, I had been damned for ever; and to be juſtified from all theſe crimes, and freed from all theſe plagues, and put into the title of an heir of heaven, O what an aſtoniſhing change was this! How much greater will that glorious change then be? Beyond expreſſing! beyond conceiving! How oft, when I have thought of this change in my regeneration, have *I* cried out, O bleſſed day! and bleſſed be the Lord that I ever ſaw it! How then ſhould I cry out in heaven, O bleſſed eternity! and bleſſed be the Lord that brought me to it: Was the mercy of my converſion ſo exceeding great, that the angels of God did rejoice to ſee it? Sure then the mercy of my ſalvation will be ſo great, that the ſame angels will congratulate my felicity. This grace is but a ſpark that is raked up in the aſhes: it is covered with fleſh

from the ſight of the world: but my everlaſting glory will not *be under a buſhel, but upon a hill, even upon* Sion, *the mount of* God.

CHAP. IX.

How to manage and watch over the heart through the whole work.

THE laſt part of this directory is, To guide you in managing your hearts through this work, and to ſhew you wherein you have need to be exceeding watchful. I have ſhewed before, what muſt be done with your hearts in your preparations to the work, and in your ſetting upon it: I ſhall now ſhew it you, in reſpect of the time of the performance. Our chief work will here be, to diſcover to you the danger, and that will direct you to the remedy. Let me therefore acquaint you before hand, that whenever you ſet upon this heavenly employment, you ſhall find your own hearts your greateſt hinderers, and they will prove falſe to you in one or all of theſe four degrees. *Firſt*, they will hold off, that you will hardly get them to the work; or elſe they will betray you by their idleneſs in the work, pretending to do it, when they do it not; or they will interrupt the work, by their frequent excurſions, and turning aſide to every object; or they will ſpoil the work by cutting it ſhort, and be gone before you have done any good on it. Therefore I forewarn you, as you value the unvaluable comfort of this work, faithfully reſiſt theſe four dangerous evils.

1. Thou ſhalt find thy heart as backward to this, as to any work in the world. O what excuſes it will make! what evaſions it will find out! and what delays, when it is never ſo much convinced! Either it will queſtion, whether it be

be a duty or not; or, if it be ſo to others, yet whether it be ſo to thee? It will take up any thing like reaſon to plead againſt it: or, if thy heart have nothing againſt the work, then it will trifle away the time in delays, and promiſe this day and the next, but ſtill keep off; or laſtly, if thou wilt not be ſo baffled with excuſes or delays, thy heart will give thee a flat denial, and oppoſe its own unwillingneſs to thy reaſon; thou ſhalt find it draw back with all the ſtrength it hath. I ſpeak all this of the heart ſo far as it is carnal: for ſo far as it is ſpiritual, it will judge this work the ſweeteſt in the world.

But take up the authority which God hath given thee, command thy heart: if it rebel, uſe violence with it; if thou be too weak, call in the Spirit of Chriſt to thine aſſiſtance: he is never backward to ſo good a work, nor will deny his help in ſo juſt a cauſe: God will be ready to help thee, if thou be not unwilling to help thyſelf. Say unto him, "Lord, thou gaveſt my reaſon the command of my thoughts and affections; the authority I have received over them is from thee, and now, behold they refuſe to obey thine authority; thou commandeſt me to ſet them to the work of heavenly meditation, but they rebel and ſtubbornly refuſe the duty; wilt thou not aſſiſt me to execute that authority which thou haſt given me? O ſend down thy ſpirit and power, that I may enforce thy commands, and effectually compel them to obey thy will."

And thus doing, thou ſhalt ſee thy heart will ſubmit; its reſiſtance will be brought under; and its backwardneſs will be turned to compliance.

2. When thou haſt got thy heart to the work, beware leſt it delude thee by a loitering formality, leſt I ſay, I go, and go not: leſt it trifle out the time, while it ſhould be effectually meditating. When thou haſt perhaps but an hour's time for meditation, the time will be ſpent before thy heart will be ſerious. This doing of duty, as if

we did it not, doth undo as many as the fiat omiſſion of it. To rub out the hour in a bare lazy thinking of heaven, is but to loſe that hour, and delude thyſelf. What is to be done in this caſe? Why do here alſo as you do by a loitering ſervant; keep thine eye always upon thy heart; look not ſo much to the time it ſpendeth in the duty, as to the work that is done: you can tell by his work, whether your ſervant hath been painful: aſk, what affections have yet been acted? How much am I yet got nearer heaven? Verily many a man's heart muſt be followed as cloſe in this duty of meditation, as an ox at the plow, that will go no longer than you are calling or ſcourging: if you ceaſe driving but a moment, the heart will ſtand ſtill.

I would not have thee of the judgment of thoſe who think that while they are ſo backward, it is better let it alone; and that if mere love will not bring them to the duty, the ſervice is worſe than the omiſſion: theſe men underſtand not, *Firſt*, that this argument would certainly caſhier all ſpiritual obedience; nor do they underſtand well the corruptneſs of their own natures; nor that their ſinful undiſpoſedneſs will not ſuſpend the commands of God; nor one ſin excuſe another: eſpecially they little know the way of God to excite their affections; and that the love which ſhould compel them muſt itſelf be firſt compelled, in the ſame ſenſe as it is ſaid to compel: love I know is a moſt precious grace, and ſhould have the chiefeſt intereſt in all our duties; but there are means appointed by God to procure this love: and ſhall I not uſe thoſe means, till I can uſe them from love; that were to neglect the means till I have the end. Muſt I not ſeek to procure love, till I have it already? There are means alſo for the increaſing of love, where it is begun, and means for exciting it where it lieth dull; and muſt I not uſe theſe means till it is increaſed and excited? Fall upon the work until thou art conſtrained

ſtrained to love; and then love will conſtrain thee to further duty.

5. As thy heart will be loitering, ſo will it be diverting. It will be turned aſide like a careleſs ſervant, to talk with every one that paſſeth by: when there ſhould be nothing in thy mind, but the work in hand: it will be thinking of thy calling, or of thy afflictions, or of every bird, or tree, or place thou ſeeſt, or of any impertinency, rather than of heaven. The cure here is the ſame with that before; to uſe watchfulneſs and violence with your own imaginations, and as ſoon as they ſtep out, to chide them in. Drive away theſe birds of prey from thy ſacrifice, and ſtrictly keep thy heart to the work thou art upon.

4. Laſtly, Be ſure alſo to look to thy heart in this, that it cut not off the work before the time, and run not away through wearineſs before it have leave. Thou ſhalt find it exceeding prone to this. Thou mayeſt eaſily perceive it in other duties; if in ſecret thou ſet thyſelf to pray, is not thy heart urging thee ſtill to cut it ſhort? Doſt thou not frequently mind a motion to have done? Art thou not ready to be up, as ſoon almoſt as thou art down on thy knees? So will it be alſo in thy contemplations of heaven; as faſt as thou getteſt up thy heart, it will be down again; it will be weary of the work; it will be minding thee of other buſineſs to be done, and ſtop thy heavenly walk, before thou art well warm. What is to be done in this caſe alſo? Why the ſame authority and reſolution which brought it to the work, and obſerved it in the work, muſt hold it to it, till the work be done. Stick to the work till thy graces be acted, thy affections raiſed, and thy ſoul refreſhed with the delights above; or if thou canſt not obtain theſe ends at once, ply it the cloſer the next time, and let it not go till thou feel the bleſſing. *Bleſſed is that ſervant, whom his* Lord, *when he comes, ſhall find ſo doing.*

Thus I have directed you in this work of heavenly contemplation, and led you into the path where

where you may walk with God. But becauſe I would bring it down to the capacity of the meaneſt, and help their memories who are apt to let ſlip the former particulars, I ſhall here contract the whole, and lay it before you in a narrower compaſs. But ſtill I wiſh thee to remember, it is the practice of a duty that I am directing thee in, and therefore if thou wilt not practiſe it, do not read it.

The ſum is this, As thou makeſt conſcience of praying daily, ſo do thou of meditation; and more eſpecially on the joys of heaven. To this end, ſet apart one hour or half hour every day, wherein thou mayeſt lay aſide all worldly thoughts, and with all poſſible ſerioufneſs and reverence, as if thou wert to ſpeak to God himſelf, or to have a ſight of Chriſt, or of that bleſſed place; ſo withdraw thyſelf into ſome ſecret place, and ſet thyſelf wholly to the following work: if thou canſt take *Iſaac's* time and place, who *went forth into the field in the even to meditate:* but if thou be a ſervant or poor man that cannot have that leiſure, take the fitteſt time and place that thou canſt, though it be when thou art private about thy labours.

When thou ſetteſt to the work, look up toward heaven, let thine eye lead thee as near as it can; remember that there is thine everlaſting reſt; ſtudy its excellency, ſtudy its reality, till thy unbelief be ſilenced, and thy faith prevail: if thy judgment be not yet drawn to admiration, uſe thoſe ſenſible helps and advantages which were even now laid down. Compare thy heavenly joys with the choiceſt on earth, and ſo riſe up from ſenſe to faith; if this mere conſideration prevail not, then plead the caſe with thy heart: preach upon this text of heaven to thyſelf: convince, inform, confute, inſtruct, reprove, examine, admoniſh, encourage, and comfort thy own ſoul from this celeſtial doctrine; draw forth thoſe ſeveral conſiderations of thy reſt, on which thy ſeveral affections may work, eſpecially that affection

affection or grace which thou intendeſt to act. If it be love which thou wouldeſt act, ſhew it the lovelineſs of heaven, and how ſuitable it is to thy condition: if it be deſire, conſider thy abſence from this lovely object: if it be hope, conſider thy abſence from this lovely object: if it be hope, conſider the poſſibility and probability of obtaining it: if it be courage, conſider the ſingular aſſiſtance and encouragements which thou mayeſt receive from God, the weakneſs of the enemy, and the neceſſity of prevailing: if it be joy, conſider its excellent raviſhing glory, thy intereſt in it, and its certainty, and the nearneſs of the time when thou mayeſt poſſeſs it. Urge theſe conſiderations home to thy heart; whet them with all poſſible ſeriouſneſs upon each affection. If thy heart draw back, force it to the work; if it loiter, ſpur it on: if it ſtep aſide, command it in again; if it would ſlip away and leave the work, uſe thine authority; keep it cloſe to the buſineſs, till thou haſt obtained thine end; ſtir not away, if it may be, till thy love flame, till thy joy be raiſed, or till thy deſire or other graces be lively. Call in aſſiſtance alſo from God, mix ejaculations with thy ſoliloquies; till having ſeriouſly pleaded the caſe with thy heart, and reverently pleaded the caſe with God, thou haſt pleaded thyſelf from a clod to a flame, from a forgetful ſinner to a mindful lover: from a lover of the world, to a thirſter after God; from a fearful coward, to a reſolved chriſtian. In a word, what will not be done one day, do it the next, till thou haſt pleaded thy heart from earth to heaven; from converſing below, to a walking with God; and till thou canſt lay thy heart to reſt, as in the boſom of Chriſt; in this meditation of thy full and everlaſting reſt.

CHAP.

CHAP: VII.

An example of this heavenly contemplation, for the help of the unſkilful.

REST! How ſweet a word is this to mine ears! Methinks the ſound doth turn to ſubſtance, and having entered at the ear, deſcendeth down to my very heart: methinks I feel it ſtir and work, and that through all my parts and powers, but with a various work upon my various parts. To my wearied ſenſes and languid ſpirits, it ſeems a quieting powerful opiate; to my dulled powers it is ſpirit and life; to my dark eyes, it is both eye-ſalve, and a perſpective: to my taſte it is ſweetneſs; to mine ears it is melody; to my hands and feet it is ſtrength and nimbleneſs; methinks I feel it digeſt as it proceeds, and increaſe my native heat and moiſture, and lying as a reviving cordial of my heart, from thence doth ſend forth lively ſpirits, which beat through all the pulſes of my ſoul, Reſt! Not as a ſtone that reſts on the earth, nor as theſe clods of fleſh ſhall reſt in the grave; ſo our beaſts muſt reſt as well as we; nor is the ſatisfying of our fleſhly luſt, nor ſuch a reſt as the carnal world deſireth: no, no; we have another kind of reſt than theſe: reſt we ſhall from our labours, which were but the way and means to reſt, but yet that is the ſmalleſt part: O bleſſed reſt, where we ſhall never reſt day nor night, crying, *Holy, holy, holy* Lord God *of ſabbaoth!* Where we ſhallceaſe from ſin, but not from worſhip! from ſufferings and ſorrow, but not from ſolace! O bleſſed day, when I ſhall reſt in the arms and boſom of my Lord? when I ſhall reſt in knowing, loving, rejoicing, and praiſing! when my perfect ſoul and body together, ſhall in theſe perfect actings perfectly enjoy the moſt perfect God! when God alſo, who is love itſelf,

ſhall

ſhall perfectly love me! and rejoice over me with joy and ſinging, as I ſhall rejoice in him! How near is that moſt bleſſed joyful day: it comes apace! Even he that cometh *will come, and will not tarry;* though my Lord ſeemeth to delay his coming, yet a little while and he will be here: what is a few hundred years when they are over? How ſurely will his ſign appear? and how ſuddenly will he ſeize upon the careleſs world? Even as the lightning that ſhines from Eaſt to Weſt in a moment. He who is gone hence will even ſo return: methinks I hear the voice of his foregoers! Methinks I ſee him in the clouds with the attendance of his angels in majeſty and glory; O poor, ſecure ſinners, what will you now do? where will you hide yourſelves? or what ſhall cover you? Mountains are gone; the earth and heavens that were, are paſſed away; the devouring fire hath conſumed all, except yourſelves, who muſt be the fewel for ever. O that you would conſume as ſoon as the earth, and melt away as did the heavens; Ah, theſe wiſhes are now but in vain; the Lamb himſelf would have been your friend, he would have loved you, and ruled you, and now it is too late! Never cry, *Lord! Lord!*—Too late, too late, man! Why doſt thou not look about? can any ſave thee? Whither doſt thou run? can any hide thee? O wretch that haſt brought thyſelf to this! Now bleſſed are ye that have believed and obeyed; this is the end of your faith and patience; this is that for which ye prayed and waited: do you now repent your ſufferings and ſorrows? your ſelf-denying and holy walking? Are your tears of repentance now bitter or ſweet? O ſee how the judge doth ſmile upon you! there is love in his looks: the titles of Redeemer, Huſband, Head, are written in his amiable face: hark! doth he not call you? he bids you ſtand here on his right hand: fear not, for there he ſets his ſheep: O joyful ſentence pronounced with his mouth! *Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the*

the foundation of the world! See how your Saviour takes you by the hand: the door is open; the kingdom is his, and therefore yours: there is your place before his throne; the Father receiveth you as the ſpouſe of his Son, he bids you welcome to the crown of glory; never ſo unworthy, crowned you muſt be: this was the project of free redeeming grace, the purpoſe of eternal love. O bleſſed grace! O bleſſed love! O the frame that my ſoul ſhall then be in! But I cannot expreſs it! I cannot conceive it!

This is that joy which was procured by ſorrow; this is that crown which was procured by the croſs. My Lord did weep, that now my tears might be wiped away; he did bleed, that I might now rejoice; he was forſaken, that I might not now be forſaken; did he then die, that I might now live. This weeping, wounded Lord, ſhall I behold; this bleeding Saviour ſhall I ſee, and live in him that died for me: O free mercy, that can exalt ſo vile a wretch! free to me, though dear to *Chriſt!* Here muſt I live with all theſe ſaints! O comfortable meeting of my old acquaintance, with whom I prayed, and wept and ſuffered; with whom I ſpake of this day and place! I ſee the grave could not contain you, the ſea and earth muſt give up their dead; the ſame love hath redeemed and ſaved you alſo; this is not like our cottages of clay, our priſons, or earthly dwellings; this voice of joy is not like our old complainings, our groans, our ſighs, our impatient moans; nor this melodious praiſe like our ſcorns and revilings, nor like the oaths and curſes which we heard on earth: this body is not like the body we had, nor this ſoul like the ſoul we had, nor this life like the life that we then lived; we have changed our place, we have changed our ſtate; our cloaths, our thoughts, our looks, our language: we have changed our company for the greater part, and the reſt of our company is changed itſelf: before we are weak and deſpiſed, but now how glorious! Where are

now

now our different judgments, our divided ſpirits? Now are we all of one judgment, of one name, of one houſe, and of one glory. O ſweet reconcilement! O happy union; which makes us firſt to be one with Chriſt, and then one with ourſelves! Now our differences ſhall be daſhed in our teeth no more, nor the goſpel reproached through our folly. O my ſoul thou ſhalt no more lament the ſufferings of the ſaints; never more condole thy church's ruins: never bewail thy ſuffering friends, nor lie wailing over their death-beds, or their graves: thou ſhalt never ſuffer thy old temptations from *Satan*, the world, or thy own fleſh; thy body will no more be ſuch a burthen to thee; thy pains and ſickneſſes are all now cured; thou ſhalt be troubled with weakneſs and wearineſs no more; thy head is not now an aching head, nor thy heart now an aching heart; thy hunger and thirſt, and cold and ſleep, thy labour and ſtudy are all gone. O what a mighty change is this! from the dunghill to the throne! from a body as vile as carrion in the ditch, to a body as bright as the ſun in the firmament! from all thy doubts and fears, to this poſſeſſion, which hath put me out of doubt! from all my fearful thoughts of death, to this moſt bleſſed joyful life! O what a change is this: Farewell ſin and ſuffering for ever! Now welcome moſt holy, heavenly nature; which as it muſt be employed in beholding the face of God, ſo it is full of God alone, delighted in nothing but him. O who can queſtion the love which he doth ſweetly taſte? or doubt of that which with ſuch joy he feeleth? Farewel repentance, confeſſion, and ſupplication; farewel hope and faith; and welcome love, and joy, and praiſe. I ſhall now have my harveſt without plowing or ſowing; my wine without the labour of the vintage; my joy without a preacher or a promiſe, even all from the face of God himſelf. Whatever mixture is in the ſtreams, there is nothing but pure joy in the fountain. Here ſhall I be encircled with eternity,

eternity, and come forth no more: here ſhall I live and ever live: and praiſe my Lord, and ever, ever praiſe him. My face will not wrinkle, nor my hair be grey; but *this mortal hath put on immortality, and this corruptible, incorruption, and death is ſwallowed up in victory: O death, where is thy ſting! O grave where is thy victory?* The date of my leaſe will no more expire, nor ſhall I loſe my joys through fear of loſing them. When millions of ages are paſt, my glory is but beginning; and when millions more are paſt, it is no nearer ending. Every day is all noontide, and every month is *May* or harveſt, and every year is there a Jubilee, and every age is full manhood: and all this but one eternity. O bleſſed Eternity! the Glory of my glory! the perfection of my perfection!

Ah drowſy, earthy, blockiſh heart, how coldly doſt thou think of this reviving day? Doſt thou ſleep when thou thinkeſt of eternal Reſt? Art thou hanging earth-ward when heaven is before thee? Hadſt thou rather ſit thee down in dung, than walk in the court of the preſence of God? Doſt thou now remember thy worldly buſineſs? Art thou thinking of thy delights? Wretched heart is it better to be there, than above with God? Is the company better? are the pleaſures greater? Come away, make no excuſe, make no delay: God commands, and I command thee, come away, gird up thy loins; aſcend the mount, and look about thee with ſerioufneſs and with faith. Look thou not back upon the way of the wilderneſs, except it be when thine eyes are dazzled with the glory, or when thou wouldſt compare the kingdom with that howling deſart, that thou mayeſt moreſenſibly perceive the mighty difference. Fix thine eye upon the ſun itſelf, and look not down to earth as long as thou art able to behold it; except it be to diſcern more eaſily the brightneſs of the one by the darkneſs of the other. Yonder is thy father's glory; yonder muſt thou dwell when thou leaveſt this earth:

earth: yonder muſt thou remove, O my ſoul, when thou departeſt from this body; and when the power of thy Lord hath raiſed it again, and joined thee to it, yonder muſt thou live with God for ever. There is the glorious *New Jeruſalem, the gates of pearl, the foundations of pearl, the ſtreets and pavement of tranſparent gold.* Seeſt thou that ſun which lighteth all the world? Why, it muſt be taken down as uſeleſs there, or the glory of heaven will darken it, and put it out; even thyſelf ſhall be as bright as yonder riſing ſun; God *will be the ſun, and* Chriſt *the light, and in his light ſhalt thou have light.*

O wretched heart, hath God made thee a promiſe of reſt, and wilt thou come ſhort of it, and ſhut out thyſelf through unbelief? Thine eyes may fail thee, thy ears deceive thee, and all thy ſenſes prove deluſions, ſooner than a promiſe of God can delude thee. Thou mayeſt be ſurer of that which is written in the word, than if thou ſee it with thy eyes, or feel it with thy hands. Art thou ſure thou liveſt? or ſure that this is the earth which thou ſtandeſt on? Art thou ſure thine eyes ſee the ſun? As ſure is all this glory to the ſaints, as ſure ſhall I be higher than yonder ſtars, and live for ever in the holy city, and joyfully ſound forth the praiſe of my Redeemer, if I be not ſhut out by the *evil heart of unbelief, cauſing me to depart from the living God.*

And is this reſt ſo ſweet, and ſo ſure? O then what means the careleſs world? Do they know what it is they ſo neglect? Did they ever hear of it? or are they yet aſleep? Do they know for certain that the crown is before them, while they thus ſit ſtill, or follow trifles, when they are haſting ſo faſt to another world, and their eternal happineſs lies at ſtake? Were there left one ſpark of reaſon, they would never ſell their reſt for toil, their glory for worldly vanities. Ah, poo men! That you would once conſider what you hazard, and then you would ſcorn theſe tempting baits. O bleſſed for ever be that love, that hath

hath reſcued me from this mad bewitching darkneſs?

Draw near yet, O my ſoul; bring forth thy ſtrongeſt love: here is matter for it to work upon: O ſee what beauty preſents itſelf: is it not exceeding lovely? Is not all the beauty in the world contracted here? Is not all other beauty deformity to it? Doſt thou need to be perſuaded now to love? Here is a feaſt for thine eyes: a feaſt for all the powers of thy ſoul: doſt thou need to be entreated to feed upon it? Canſt thou love a little ſhining earth? Canſt thou love a walking piece of clay? And canſt thou not love that God, that Chriſt, that glory, which is ſo truly and unmeaſurably lovely! Thou canſt love thy friend becauſe he loves thee; and is the love of friends like the love of *Chriſt?* Their weeping or bleeding for thee doth not eaſe thee nor ſtay the courſe of thy tears or blood: but the tears and blood that fell from thy Lord, have all a ſovereign healing virtue, and are waters of life, and balſam to thy fainting ſores. O my ſoul! if love deſerve, and ſhould procure love, what incomprehenſible love is here before thee! Pour out all the ſtore of thy affections here; and all is too little. O that it were more! Let him be firſt ſerved, that ſerved thee firſt: let him have the ſtrength of thy love, who parted with ſtrength and life in love to thee: if thou haſt any to ſpare when he hath his part, let it be imparted then to ſtanders-by. See what a ſea of love is here before thee; caſt thyſelf in this ocean of his love: fear not, though it ſeem a furnace of fire, and the hotteſt that ever was kindled upon earth, yet it is the fire of love and not of wrath; a fire moſt effectual to extinguiſh fire; never intended to conſume but to glorify thee: venture into it then in thy believing meditations, and walk in theſe flames with the Son of God; when thou art once in, thou wilt be ſorry to come forth again. O my ſoul! what wanteſt thou here to provoke thy love? Doſt thou love for excellency?

cellency? Why thou ſeeſt nothing below but baſeneſs, except as they relate to the enjoyments above. Yonder is the *Goſhen*, the region of light; this is a land of palpable darkneſs. Yonder ſtars, that ſhining moon, the radient ſun, are all but as the lanterns hanged out at thy Father's houſe, to light thee while thou walkeſt in the dark ſtreets of the earth: but little doſt thou know the glory that is within? Doſt thou love for ſuitableneſs? Why what perſon more ſuitable than *Chriſt?* His godhead, his manhood, his fulneſs, his freeneſs, his willingneſs, his conſtancy; do all proclaim him thy moſt ſuitable friend. What ſtate more ſuitable to thy miſery than that of mercy? Or to thy ſinfulneſs and baſeneſs, than that of honour and perfection? What place more ſuitable to thee than heaven? Thou haſt had a ſufficient trial of this world: doſt thou find it agree with thy nature or deſires? Are theſe common abominations, theſe heavy ſufferings, theſe unſatisfying vanities ſuitable to thee? Or doſt thou love for intereſt more than near relation? Where haſt thou better intereſt than in heaven? Or where haſt thou nearer relation than there? Doſt thou love for acquaintance and familiarity? Why, though thine eyes have never ſeen the Lord, yet he is never the further from thee. If thy ſon were blind, yet he would love thee his father, though he never ſaw thee. Thou haſt heard the voice of *Chriſt* to thy very heart, thou haſt received his benefits: thou haſt lived in his boſom, and art thou not yet acquainted with him? It is he that brought thee ſeaſonably and ſafely into the world. It is he that nurſed thee in thy tender infancy, and helped thee when thou couldſt not help thyſelf: he taught thee to go, to ſpeak, to read, to underſtand; he taught thee to know, thyſelf and him: he opened thee that firſt window whereby thou ſaweſt into heaven. Haſt thou forgotten ſince thy heart was careleſs, and he quickened it, and made it yield; when it was at peace, and he troubled it: and broken till he did heal it again!

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Haſt thou forgotten the time, nay the many times when he found thee in ſecret, all in tears; when he heard thy ſighs and groans, and left all to come and comfort thee! when he came in upon thee, and took thee up as it were in his arms, and aſked thee, Poor ſoul, what aileth thee? Doſt thou weep, when I have wept ſo much? Be of good cheer: thy wounds are ſaving and not deadly. It is I that have made them, who mean thee no hurt: though I let out thy blood, I will not let out thy life.

Methinks I remember yet his voice, and feel thoſe arms that took me up: how gently did he handle me! How carefully did he dreſs my wounds and bind them up! Methinks I hear him ſtill ſaying, though thou haſt dealt unkindly with me, yet will not I do ſo by thee; though thou haſt ſet light by me and all my mercies: yet both I and all are thine; what wouldſt thou have that I cannot give thee? If any thing in heaven and earth will make thee happy, it is all thy own: wouldſt thou have pardon? Thou ſhalt have it, I freely forgive thee all the debt. Wouldſt thou have grace and peace? thou ſhalt have them both: wouldſt thou have Myſelf? Behold I am thine, thy friend, thy Lord, thy huſband, and thy head. Wouldſt thou have the Father? I will bring thee to him: and thou ſhalt have him in and by me.——Theſe were my Lord's reviving words: theſe were the melting, healing, quickening paſſages of Love. After all this, when I was doubtful of his love: methinks I yet remember his convincing arguments.—Have I done ſo much to teſtify my love, and yet doſt thou doubt? Have I made thy believing it the condition of enjoying it, and yet doſt thou doubt? Have I offered thee myſelf ſo long, and yet doſt thou doubt? Have I offered thee myſelf ſo long, and yet doſt thou queſtion my willingneſs to be thine? *What could I have done more than I have done?* At what dearer rate ſhould I tell thee that I love thee? Read the ſtory of my bitter paſſion, wilt thou

thou not believe that it proceeded from love? Did I ever give thee cauſe to be ſo jealous of me? or to think ſo hardly of me, as thou doſt? Have I made myſelf, in the goſpel a lion, to thine enemies, and a lamb to thee: and doſt thou overlook my lamb-like nature? Have I ſet mine arms and heart there open to thee, and wilt thou not believe but they are ſhut? If I had been willing to let thee periſh, I could have done it at a cheaper rate: what need I follow thee with ſo long patience, and entreating? What, doſt thou tell me of thy wants? Have I not enough for me and thee? and why doſt thou tell me of thine unworthineſs and thy ſin? I had not died, if man had not ſinned: if thou wert not a ſinner, thou wert not for me; if thou wert worthy thyſelf what ſhouldſt thou do with my worthineſs? Did I ever invite the worthy and the righteous? or did I ever ſave or juſtify ſuch? or are there any ſuch on earth? Haſt thou nothing? art thou loſt and miſerable? art thou helpleſs and forlorn? doſt thou believe that I am a ſufficient Saviour? and wouldſt thou have Me? Why then take Me. Lo, I am thine: if thou be willing, I am willing, and neither ſin nor death ſhall break the match.

Theſe, O theſe were the bleſſed words, which his Spirit from his goſpel ſpoke unto me, till he made me caſt myſelf at his feet, yea into his arms, and cry out, "My Saviour and my Lord, Thou haſt broke my heart, Thou haſt revived my heart, Thou haſt overcome, Thou haſt won my heart, take it; it is thine: if ſuch a heart can pleaſe thee, take it; if it cannot, make it as thou wouldſt have it."

Thus, O my ſoul, mayeſt thou remember the ſweet familiarity thou haſt had with Chriſt; therefore if acquaintance will cauſe affection, O then knit thy heart unto him; it is he that hath ſtood by thy bed of ſickneſs, that hath cooled thy heats, and eaſed thy pains, and refreſhed thy wearineſs, and removed thy fears; he hath been always ready, when thou haſt earneſtly ſought

him; he hath given thee the meeting in public and in private; he hath been found of thee in the congregation, in thy houſe, in thy chamber, in the field, in the way, as thou waſt walking, in thy waking nights, in thy deepeſt dangers. If bounty and compaſſion be an attractive of love, how unmeaſurably then am I bound to love him? All the mercies that have filled up my life tell me this; all the places that ever I did abide in, every condition of life that I have paſſed through, all my employments, and all my relations, every change that hath befallen me, all tell me, that the fountain is overflowing goodneſs.

Lord, what a ſum of love am I indebted to thee, and how doth my debt continually increaſe! How ſhould I love again for ſo much love? But what! ſhall I dare to think of making thee a requital, or of recompenſing all thy love with mine! Will my mite requite thee for thy golden mines? or mine, which is nothing or not mine, for thine, which is infinite and thine own? Shall I dare to contend in love with thee, or ſet my borrowed ſpark, againſt the ſun of love? Can I love as high, as deep, as broad, as long, as love itſelf; as much as he that made me, and that made me live, that gave me all that little which I have? Both the heat, the fire, the fewel, and all were his: as I cannot match thee in the works of thy power, nor make, nor preſerve, nor guide the world; ſo why ſhould I think any more of matching thee in love: no, Lord, I yield, I am overcome: O bleſſed conqueſt! Go on victoriouſly, and ſtill prevail, and triumph in thy love: the captive of love ſhall proclaim thy victory, when thou leadeſt me in triumph from earth to heaven, from death to life, from the tribunal to the throne; myſelf, and all that ſee it, ſhall acknowledge, that thou haſt prevailed, and all ſhall ſay, *Behold! how he loved him!*—Yet let me love thee, in ſubjection to thy love, as thy redeemed captive, though I cannot reach thy meaſure.

O my

O my ſoul, begin it here; be ſick of love now, that thou mayeſt be well with love there; *keep thyſelf now in the love of God*, and let neither life nor death, nor any thing ſeparate thee from it, and thou ſhalt be kept in the fulneſs of love for ever; for the Lord hath prepared a city of love, a place for the communicating of love to his choſen, and thoſe that love his name ſhall dwell there.

Away then, O my drowſy ſoul, from this world's uncomfortable darkneſs! The night of thy ignorance and miſery is paſt, the day of glorious light is at hand: this is the day-break betwixt them both: though thou ſee not yet the ſun itſelf appear, methinks the twilight of promiſe will revive thee! Come forth then, and leave theſe earthly cells, and hear thy Lord that bids thee rejoice, and again rejoice! Thou haſt lain there long enough in thy priſon of fleſh, where Satan hath been thy jailor, where cares have been thy irons, and fears thy ſcourge, and the bread and water of affliction thy food; where ſorrows have been thy lodging, and a carnal, hard, unbelieving heart the iron gates and bars that have kept thee in, that thou couldſt ſcarce have leave to look through the lattices, and ſee one glimpſe of the immortal light: the angel of the covenant now calls thee, and ſtrikes thee, and bids thee ariſe and follow him: up, O my ſoul, and chearfully obey, and thy bolts and bars ſhall all fly open; do thou obey, and all will obey; follow the Lamb which way ever he leads thee: art thou afraid, becauſe thou knoweſt not whither? Can the place be worſe than where thou art? Shouldſt thou fear to follow ſuch a guide? Can the ſun lead thee to a ſtate of darkneſs? or can he miſlead thee that *is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world*? Will he lead thee to death, who died to ſave thee from it? Or can he do thee any hurt, who for thy ſake did ſuffer ſo much? Follow him, and he will ſhew thee the paradiſe of God, he will give thee a taſte of the tree of life; thy winter is paſt, and wilt thou

houſe thyſelf ſtill in earthly thoughts; and confine thyſelf to drooping and dulneſs?

Come forth, O my drooping ſoul, and lay aſide thy winter, mourning robes; let it be ſeen in thy believing joys and praiſe, that the day is appearing, and the ſpring is come; and as now thou ſeeſt thy comforts green, thou ſhalt ſhortly ſee them white and ripe for harveſt; and then thou, who art now called forth to ſee and taſte, ſhalt be called forth to reap, and gather, and take poſſeſſion. Shall I ſuſpend and delay my joys till then? Should not the joys of the ſpring go before the joys of harveſt? Is the heir in no better a ſtate than the ſlave? My Lord, hath taught me to rejoice in the hope of his glory, and to ſee it through the bars of a priſon, and even when I am *perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake*, when I am *reviled, and all manner of evil ſaid againſt me for his ſake*, then he hath commanded me to *rejoice and be exceeding glad, becauſe of this my great reward in heaven*. How juſtly is an unbelieving heart poſſeſſed by ſorrow, and made a prey to cares and fears, when itſelf doth create them, and thruſt away its offered peace and joy! I know it is the pleaſure of my bounteous Lord, that none of his family ſhould want comfort, nor live ſuch a poor and miſerable life, nor look with ſuch a famiſhed dejected face. I know he would have my joys exceed my ſorrows, and as much as he delights in the humble and contrite, yet doth he more delight in the ſoul as it delighteth in him. Hath my Lord ſpread me a table in the wilderneſs, and furniſhed it with promiſes of everlaſting glory, and ſet before me angels food, and broached for me the ſide of his beloved Son, that I might have better wine than the blood of the grape? Doth he ſo importunately invite me to ſit down, and draw forth my faith, and feed, and ſpare not? Nay, hath he furniſhed me to that end, with reaſon and faith, and a rejoicing diſpoſition? And yet it is poſſible that he ſhould be unwilling I ſhould rejoice? Never think it, O my unbelieving ſoul; nor dare charge him with thy uncomfortable

uncomfortable heavineſs, who offereth thee the foretaſte of the higheſt delight that heaven can afford, and God can beſtow. Doth he not bid thee *delight thyſelf in the Lord?* and promiſe to give thee *the deſires of thy heart!* Hath he not charged thee *to rejoice evermore!* Yea to *ſing aloud and ſhout for joy!*

Away you cares and fears! Away you importunate ſorrows! Stay here below whilſt I go up and ſee my Reſt. The way is ſtrange to me, but not to Chriſt. There was the eternal dwellings of his glorious Deity: and thither hath he alſo brought his glorified fleſh. It was his work to purchaſe it; it is his work to prepare it, and to prepare me for it, and to bring me to it. The eternal God of truth hath given me his promiſe, his ſeal, and his oath to aſſure me, that *believing in* Chriſt, *I ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting life:* thither ſhall my ſoul be ſpeedily removed, and my body ſhortly follow. And can my tongue ſay, that I ſhall ſhortly and ſurely live with God, and yet my heart not leap within me? Can I ſay it believingly, and not rejoicingly? Ah faith, how do I perceive thy weakneſs? Ah unbelief! if I had never known it before, how ſenſible do I now perceive thy malicious tyranny? But were it not for thee, what abundance might I have? The light of heaven would ſhine into my heart, and I might be as familiar there as I am on earth.

Come away my ſoul, then, ſtand not looking on that grave, nor turning thoſe bones, nor reading thy leſſon in the duſt: but lift up thy head and look to heaven, and read thy inſtructions in thoſe fixed ſtars: or yet look higher than thoſe eyes can ſee, into that foundation which ſtandeth ſure, and ſee thy name written in the book of life. What if an angel ſhould come from heaven and tell thee, that there is a manſion prepared for thee; that it ſhall certainly be thine own, and thou ſhalt poſſeſs it for ever; would not ſuch a meſſage make thee glad? And doſt thou make light of the infallible word of promiſes which

were delivered by the Spirit, and by the Lord himſelf?

What delight have I found in my private ſtudies, eſpecially when they have proſpered to the increaſe of knowledge! Methinks I could bid the world farewell, and immure myſelf in ſweet content, and pity the rich and great ones that know not happineſs. Sure then it is a high delight indeed, which in the lap of eternity is enjoyed!

If the queen of *Sheba* came from *Æthiopia* to hear the wiſdom of *Solomon*, and ſee his glory; O how gladly ſhould I paſs from earth to heaven; to ſee the glory of that eternal majeſty; and to attain myſelf that height of wiſdom, in compariſon of which the moſt learned on earth are but fools and idiots! If the heaven of glaſs which the *Perſian* emperor framed, were ſo glorious a piece, and the heaven of ſilver which the emperor *Ferdinand* ſent to the Great Turk, becauſe of their rare artificial repreſentations and motions, what will the heaven of heavens be, which is not formed by the art of man, nor beautified like theſe childiſh toys; but it is the matchleſs palace of the great King, built by himſelf for the reſidence of his glory, and the perpetual entertainment of his beloved ſaints!

I cannot here enjoy my parents, or my beloved friends without ſome delight; what will it then be to live in the perpetual love of God! For brethren here to live together in unity, how good and pleaſant a thing is it? To ſee a family live in love; huſbands, wives, parents, children, ſervants, doing all in love to one another! O then, what a bleſſed ſociety will be the family of heaven, and thoſe peaceable inhabitants of the *New Jeruſalem*? Where is no diviſion, no diſaffection, nor ſtrangeneſs, nor deceitful friendſhip; never an angry thought or look, never an unkind expreſſion, but all one in Chriſt, who is one with the Father, and live in the love of Love Himſelf!

Awake then, O my drowſy ſoul, and look above this world of ſorrow! Haſt thou bore the yoke

of afflictions from thy youth, and ſo long felt the ſmarting rod, and yet canſt no better underſtand its meaning? Is not every ſtroke to drive thee hence? And is not the voice like that to *Elijah*, *What doſt thou here? Up and away.* Doſt thou forget that ſure prediction of the Lord, *In the world ye ſhall have trouble, but in me ye ſhall have peace!* The firſt thou haſt found true by long experience: and of the latter thou haſt had a ſmall foretaſte; but the perfect peace is yet before, which till it be enjoyed cannot be clearly underſtood.

Ah my Lord, I feel thy meaning; it is written in my fleſh; it is engraven on my bones: my heart thou aimeſt at. thy rod doth drive, thy ſilken cord of love doth draw: and all to bring it to thyſelf: can ſuch a heart be worth thy having? Make it ſo, Lord, and then it is thine: take it to thyſelf, and then it is thine: take it to thyſelf, and then take me. I cannot but reach it toward thee, and not unto thee: I am too low: and it is too dull; this clod hath life to ſtir, but not to riſe: as the feeble child to the tender mother, it looketh up to thee, and ſtretcheth out the hands, and fain would have thee take it up. Indeed, Lord, my ſoul is in a ſtrait, and what to chuſe I know not, but thou knoweſt what to give: to depart, and be with thee, is beſt, but yet to be in the fleſh ſeems needful. Thou knoweſt I am not weary of thy work; I am willing to ſtay while thou wilt here employ me, and to diſpatch the work which thou haſt put in my hands: but I beſeech thee ſtay no longer when this is done; and while I muſt be here, let me be ſtill amending and aſcending; make me ſtill better, and take me at the beſt. I dare not be ſo impatient of living, as to importune thee to cut off my time, and urge thee to ſnatch me hence: nor yet would I ſtay when my work is done; and remain under thy feet while they are in thy boſom; I am thy child as well as they; Chriſt is my head as well as theirs; why is there then ſo great a diſtance? I acknowledge the equity of thy ways; though

we are all children, yet I am the prodigal, and therefore meeter in this remote country to feed on huſks, while they are always with thee, and poſſeſs thy glory: but they were once in my condition, and I ſhall ſhortly be in theirs: they were of the loweſt form, before they came to the higheſt: they ſuffered before they reigned; they came out of great tribulation, who are now ſtanding before thy throne: and ſhall not I be content to come to the crown as they did! and to drink of their cup before I ſit with them in the kingdom? I am contented, O my Lord, to ſtay thy time, and go thy way, ſo thou wilt exalt me alſo in thy ſeaſon, and take me into thy barn when thou ſeeſt me ripe. In the mean time I may deſire, though I am not to repine; I may believe and wiſh, though not make ſinful haſte; I am content to wait, but not to loſe thee: and when thou ſeeſt me too contented with thine abſence, quicken then my dull deſires, and blow up the dying ſpark of love; and leave me not till I am able unfeignedly to cry out, *As the hart panteth after the brooks, and the dry land thirſteth for water ſtreams, ſo thirſteth my ſoul after thee, O God: when ſhall I come and appear before the living God.* What intereſt hath this empty world in me? And what is there in it that may ſeem ſo lovely, as to entice my deſires and delights in thee, or to make me loth to come away? Draw forth my ſoul to thyſelf by the ſecret power of thy love, as the ſunſhine in the ſpring draws forth the creatures from their winter cells; meet it half-way, and entice it to thee, as the loadſtone doth the iron: diſpel the clouds that hide from me thy love, or remove the ſcales that hinder mine eyes from beholding thee: for only the beams that ſtream from thy face, and the taſte of thy ſalvation can make a ſoul unfeignedly ſay, *Lord, now let thy ſervant depart in peace.*

Send forth thy convoy of angels for my departing ſoul, and let them bring it among the perfect ſpirits of the juſt, and let me follow my dear

dear friends that have died in Chriſt before; and when my friends are crying over my grave, let my ſpirit be repoſed with thee in Reſt; and when my corpſe ſhall lie there rotting in the dark, let my ſoul be in the inheritance of the Saints in light. And O thou that numbereſt the hairs of my head, number all the days that my body lies in the duſt; thou that writeſt all my members in thy book, keep an account of all my ſcattered bones; and haſten, O my Saviour, the time of thy return: ſend forth thine angels, and let that dreadful, joyful trumpet ſound; delay not, leſt the living give up their hopes: delay not, leſt earth ſhould grow like hell, and leſt thy church by diviſion be crumbled to duſt: delay not, leſt thine enemies get advantage of thy flock, and leſt pride and hypocriſy, and ſenſuality, and unbelief, ſhould prevail againſt thy little remnant, and ſhare among them thy whole inheritance, and when thou comeſt thou find not faith on the earth. Delay not, leſt the grave ſhould boaſt of victory, and refuſe to deliver thee up thy due; O haſten that great reſurrection day! When thy command ſhall go forth, and none ſhall diſobey; when the ſea and earth ſhall yield up their hoſtages, and all that ſleep in the grave ſhall awake, and the dead in Chriſt firſt ariſe! when the ſeed that thou ſoweſt corruptible, ſhall come forth incorruptible; and graves that received but rottenneſs, and retained but duſt, ſhall return thee glorious ſtars and ſuns: therefore dare I lay down my carcaſs in the duſt, entruſting it, not to a grave, but to thee; and therefore my fleſh ſhall reſt in hope, till thou raiſe it to the Everlaſting Reſt. Return, O Lord, how long? O let thy kingdom come! Thy deſolate bride ſaith, *Come;* for thy Spirit within her ſaith, *Come,* who teacheth her thus to pray with groanings which cannot be expreſſed: the whole creation ſaith, *Come,* waiting to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God: thyſelf hath ſaid, *Surely I come quickly. Amen, even ſo, come Lord Jeſus!*

The CONCLUSION.

THUS, Reader, I have given thee my beſt advice for the attaining and maintaining a heavenly converſation. The manner is imperfect, and too much my own; but for the main matter I received it from God. From him I deliver it to thee, and this charge I lay upon thee, that thou entertain and practiſe it. If thou canſt not do it fully, do it as thou canſt; only be ſure thou do it ſeriouſly and frequently. If thou wilt believe a man that hath made ſome ſmall trial of it, thou ſhalt find it will make thee another man, and elevate thy ſoul, and clear thy underſtanding, and leave a pleaſant ſavour upon thy heart; ſo that thy own experience will make thee confeſs, that one hour thus ſpent will more effectually revive thee, than many in bare external duties; and a day in theſe contemplations will afford thee truer content, than all the glory and riches of the earth. Be acquainted with this work, and thou wilt be acquainted with God: thy joys will be ſpiritual and laſting: thou wilt have comfort in life, and comfort in death: when thou haſt neither wealth nor health, nor the pleaſures of this world, yet wilt thou have comfort: comfort without the preſence or help of any friend, without a book, when all means are denied thee, or taken from thee, yet mayeſt thou have vigorous, real comfort. Thy graces will be active, and victorious; and the daily joy which is thus fetched from heaven, will be thy ſtrength; thou wilt be as one that ſtandeth on the top of an exceeding high mountain; he looks down on the world as if it were quite below him: how ſmall do the fields, and woods, and countries ſeem to him? Cities and towns ſeem but little ſpots. Thus deſpicably wilt thou look on all things here below: the greateſt princes will ſeem but as graſs-hoppers, and the buſy, contentious, covetous world, but as heaps

heaps of ants. Men's threatenings will be no terror to thee; nor the honours of this world any ſtrong enticement; temptations will be harmleſs, as having loſt their ſtrength; and afflictions leſs grievous, as having loſt their ſting; and every mercy will be better known and reliſhed.

Reader, it is (under God) in thy own choice now, whether thou wilt live this bleſſed life or not: and whether all this pains which I have taken for thee, ſhall proſper or be loſt. If it be loſt through thy lazineſs, (which God forbid) thou wilt prove the greater loſer thyſelf.

O man, what haſt thou to mind, but God and heaven? Art thou not almoſt out of this world already? Doſt thou not look every day, when one diſeaſe or other will let out thy ſoul? Doth not the bier ſtand ready to carry thee to the grave? and the worms wait to feed upon thy face and heart? What if thy pulſe muſt beat a few ſtrokes more? And what if thou haſt a few more breaths to fetch, before thou breathe thy laſt? And what if thou haſt a few more nights to ſleep, before thou ſleep in the duſt? Alas, what will this be, when it is gone? And is it not almoſt gone already? Shortly thou wilt ſee thy glaſs run out, and ſay thyſelf, My life is done! My time is gone! There is nothing now, but heaven or hell; where then ſhould thy heart be now, but in heaven? Didſt thou but know what a dreadful thing it is to have a doubt of heaven, when a man lies dying, it would rouze thee up.

O what a life might men live, if they were but willing and diligent; God would have our joys to be far more than our ſorrows; yea, he would have us to have no ſorrow, but what tendeth to joy; and no more than our ſins have made neceſſary for our good. How much do thoſe chriſtians wrong God and themſelves, that either make their thoughts of God the inlet of their ſorrows, or let theſe offered joys lie by, as neglected or forgotten! Some there be that ſay, It is not worth ſo much time and trouble, to think of the greatneſs of the joys above. But as theſe men

obey

obey not the command of God, which requireth them to have their affections on things above; ſo do they wilfully make their own lives miſerable, by refuſing the delights that God had ſet before them. And yet if this were all, it were a ſmall matter; if it were but loſs of their comforts, I would not ſay much: but ſee what abundance of other miſchiefs follow the abſence of theſe heavenly delights.

Firſt, It will damp, if not deſtroy, our very love to God: ſo deeply as we apprehend his exceeding love to us, and his purpoſe to make us eternally happy, ſo much will it raiſe our love: love to God, and delight in him, are ſtill conjunct. They that conceive of God as one that deſireth their blood and damnation, cannot heartily love him.

Secondly, It will make us have rare and unpleaſing thoughts of God; for our thoughts will follow our love and delight. Did we more delight in God than in any thing below, our thoughts would as freely run after him, as they now run from him.

Thirdly, And it will make men have as rare and unpleaſing ſpeeches of God: for who will care for talking of that which he hath no delight in? What makes men ſtill talking of worldlineſs or wickedneſs, but that theſe are more pleaſant to them than God?

Fourthly, Men will have no delight in the ſervice of God, when they have no delight in God, nor any ſweet thoughts of heaven, which is the end of their ſervices. No wonder if ſuch chriſtians complain, that they are ſtill backward to duty; that they have no delight in prayer, in ſacraments, or in ſcripture itſelf: if thou couldſt once delight in God, thou wouldſt eaſily delight in duty; eſpecially that which bringeth thee into neareſt converſe with him; but till then, no wonder if thou be weary of all.

Fifthly, This want of heavenly delight will leave men under the power of every affliction; they will have nothing to comfort them, and eaſe them

them in their ſufferings, but the empty, ineffectual pleaſures of the fleſh; and when that is gone, where then is their delight?

Sixthly, It will make them fearful and unwilling to die: for who would go to a God, or a place that he hath no delight in? Or who would leave his pleaſure here, except it were to go to better? But if men take delight in God whilſt they live, they will not tremble at the tidings of death.

If God would perſuade you now to make conſcience of this duty, and help you in it by the bleſſed influence of his Spirit, you would not change your lives with the greateſt prince on earth. But I am afraid, if I may judge of your hearts by the backwardneſs of my own, that it will prove a hard thing to perſuade you to the work. Pardon my jealouſy; it is raiſed upon too many and ſad experiments. What ſay you? Do you reſolve on this heavenly courſe or no? Will you let go all your ſinful pleaſures, and daily ſeek theſe higher delights? I pray thee, Reader, conſider of it, and reſolve on the work before thou goeſt further. Let thy family perceive, let thy neighbours perceive, let thy conſcience perceive, yea, let God perceive it, that thou art a man which haſt thy converſation in heaven. God hath now offered to be thy daily delight; thy neglect is thy refuſal. Take heed what thou doſt: refuſe this, and refuſe all; thou muſt have heavenly delights, or none that are laſting. God is willing that thou ſhouldſt walk with him, and fetch in conſolation from the everlaſting fountain: if thou be willing, bear the loſs; and when thou lieſt dying, then ſeek for comfort where thou canſt. O how is the unſeen God neglected, and the unſeen glory forgotten? and all for want of that *faith which is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things that are not ſeen.*

But for you whoſe hearts God hath weaned from all things here below, I hope you will fetch one walk daily in the *New Jeruſalem!* God is

your love and your deſire; and I know you would fain be more acquainted with your Saviour, and I know it is your grief that your hearts are not more near him; and that they do no more paſſionately love and delight in him. As ever you would enjoy your deſires, try this life of meditation on your everlaſting Reſt.

O Thou, the merciful Father of Spirits, the Attractive of love and Ocean of delights, draw up theſe droſſy hearts unto thyſelf, and keep them there till they are ſpiritualized and refined, and ſecond theſe thy ſervant's weak endeavours, and perſuade thoſe that read theſe lines, to the practice of this delightful, heavenly work! O ſuffer not the ſoul of thy moſt unworthy ſervant to be a ſtranger to thoſe joys which he unfoldeth to thy people, or to be ſeldom in that way which he hath marked out to others! but O keep me while I tarry on this earth, in daily ſerious breathings after thee, and in a believing, affectionate walking with thee; and when thou comeſt, O let me be found ſo doing, not hiding my talent, nor ſerving my fleſh, nor yet aſleep with my lamp unfurniſhed, but waiting and longing for my Lord's return: that thoſe who ſhall read theſe directions, may not reap only the fruit of my ſtudies, but the breathings of my active hope and love: that if my heart were open to their view, they might there read the ſame, moſt deeply engraven with a beam from the face of the Son of God; and not find vanity or luſt, or pride within, where the words of life appear without; that ſo theſe lines may not witneſs againſt me; but proceeding from the heart of the writer, may be effectual, through thy grace upon the heart of the reader, and ſo be the ſavour of life to both.

GLORY *be to* GOD *in the higheſt: On earth peace: Good-will towards men.*

F I N I S.

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